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The New REPUBLIC

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MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE KILLING FIELDS...

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Discovery Channel

Give the White House credit. Amid signs that the recession is ending, administration officials are resisting what must be an enormous temptation to gloat. "I think we're certainly on track to, at least, stabilizing the patient," said Labor Secretary Hilda Solis during a recent CNBC appearance. But "[t]he patient is still sick." It's hardly a triumphalist metaphor.

To the extent that there's a problem, it's not what the administration is saying so much as what it is assuming: that the business cycle exerts an irresistible gravitational pull—that what goes down must eventually come up. "[B]ecause of the Recovery Act, other rescue measures we have taken, *and the economy's natural resilience*, most forecasters are now predicting that GDP growth is likely to turn positive by the end of the year," Christina Romer, head of Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, said in an early August speech (emphasis added). Romer went on to stress that 70 percent of the stimulus will be spent by next October—implying that growth should be largely self-sustaining beyond that.

We wish we could be confident of this. Unfortunately, even granting that the worst is over, it's hard to believe that the economy will be poised for steady growth just a year or two after the worst recession since the 1930s.

Pretty much everything we know about the recessions that follow financial crises suggests that they last for an exceptionally long time because they have to contend with vast oceans of debt. During boom times, people save less and borrow more, leading to a surge of consumer spending. But, once the crisis hits, overextended households abruptly retrench. Saving shoots up as people pay down their debts; consumption plummets and can languish for years.

Traditionally, there have been two ways out of such a recession. The less painful one is through exports: Foreign consumers offset the shortfall in domestic demand, raising employment and income. But exports are unlikely to save us this time around. The global nature of the recession means no advanced economy is flush enough to serve as a buyer of last resort (though some are now staggering into recoveries of their own).

Absent salvation through exports, the most plausible way to crawl out of a recession caused by a financial crisis is for households to pay off debt until they can afford to spend again. Indeed, as Paul Krugman argued in a recent lecture series at the London School of Economics (LSE), the reason that the United States didn't slip back into depression after World War II—something many economists feared at the time—is that, 15 years after the initial crash, people had finally put their finances in order.

Unfortunately, as the Depression example suggests, bringing a nation's worth of households back into the black can take an agonizingly long time. According to data from the Federal Reserve, household debt peaked at 128 percent of disposable income in 2007. A recent San Francisco Fed paper notes that it took Japanese companies, which had a similar level of indebtedness when that country's real-estate bubble popped in the early 1990s, about a decade to push the ratio down to a still-high 95 percent.

Alas, the practical and moral consequences of a lost American decade are too grim to contemplate. The only solution may be an approach that has long been anathema in Washington: industrial policy (that is, an active government role in the development of certain industries). In his LSE lectures, Krugman quipped that "if someone could invent the twenty-first century moral equivalent of the railroad, or actually even the moral equivalent of IT in the nineties, that would help a lot." We agree: Innovations like the railroad and the Internet tend to unleash periods of rapid growth. But waiting around for serendipity to strike seems risky in a moment like this. If, on the other hand, the government were to place some massive bets on R&D, we might substantially increase our chances of stumbling onto a major technological breakthrough—or at least accelerate the process.

True, industrial policy is a lousy idea under normal circumstances: Any invention with lucrative commercial applications should have a high enough expected return to attract private capital. Using government money to fund progressively longer shots is likely to be wasteful. But, in a deep recession like this one, the case for industrial policy gets much stronger. At worst, the additional government spending would inject some needed stimulus into the economy. At best, it might yield a technological breakthrough that could attract a subsequent wave of investment and make growth self-sustaining.

Robert Neubecker

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In fairness, the White House has already been thinking along these lines. In early August, it announced $2.4 billion in grants to companies working on the "next generation of U.S. batteries and electric vehicles." (The money was allocated under the stimulus, which provided $5-10 billion for such R&D efforts overall.) But, while much better than nothing, the amount is meager given the scale of the problem. Why not 50 times that allocation, spread out over dozens of promising fields—such as solar power and nanotechnology?

Admittedly, coming on the heels of the stimulus, the bank bailout, the auto-company takeover, and health care reform, another $100 billion in government spending would trigger waves of apoplexy from the tea-party right. On the other hand, there are tougher tasks than handing out money to corporate America. If the administration were keen, it could knit together a coalition of Democrats, business interests, and corporate-minded Republicans, of which there are still more than a few. That doesn't mean it would be politically painless. But it sure beats waiting for that recovery to materialize on its own … sometime in 2018. ◆

Chucking Grassley

"We should not have a government plan that will pull the plug on grandma." That's not Rush Limbaugh or Sarah Palin talking. That's Charles Grassley, the supposedly respectable Republican senator from Iowa, speaking before a town hall in August. Grassley knows better, of course. As the ranking minority member of the Senate Finance Committee, he's been immersed in the issue for months. And there's nothing in the bills moving through Congress that would encourage, let alone force, people to end life-sustaining treatment for their loved ones or themselves.

Maybe Grassley was just responding to pressure from his party leadership, which has declared all-out war on the Democrats' plans for health care reform. Or maybe he's just channeling his own anxieties over what he and his colleagues on the committee have been debating during the last few months. Whatever. Grassley was supposed to be one of a handful of reasonable Republicans, the type that would sign on to reform only if it contained enough compromises from the left. But his statement about killing grandma—along with other comments he's made—is a pretty clear signal that Grassley wants no part of a Democratic health care bill. Bipartisan reform seems to be dead.

To which we say: Thank goodness. In the last few months, few political spectacles have been more unnerving than the sight of President Obama and his allies lowering their ambitions, bit by bit, in a painfully futile effort to win support from Republicans. The pattern was on perfect display this week. One of the biggest flash points in the reform debate concerns whether to create a public insurance plan—a government-run program, like Medicare, that would compete with private insurers for business. Liberals (including those at this magazine) love the idea, because they think a government plan will be more reliable, not to mention cheaper. Conservatives hate the idea, because they fear a government-run program will run private insurers out of business. As an effort to forge a consensus, some Democrats have suggested ditching the public plan and, instead, creating a set of consumer-run, nonprofit health care cooperatives. The hope was that these co-ops would be more acceptable to the GOP, since they wouldn't be government-run. But the hope turned out to be baseless. As the idea started to gain momentum, Senate Minority Whip Jon Kyl held a conference call to denounce the co-ops as government-run insurance by another name. He and his colleagues weren't budging.

None of this should be surprising. In the last two decades, Democrats have tried a variety of health care reforms—some big, some small. They proposed to insure everybody, and they proposed to insure just kids. They tried to restructure the entire insurance market, and they tried merely to regulate the most egregiously restrictive HMO practices. But Republicans attacked every single measure with the same charge: It's socialized medicine. This is not a party out to criticize and modify health care reform. This is a party out to kill health care reform. That's its prerogative, to be sure. But if that's the way Republicans are going to act, Democrats have no obligation to work with them. Bipartisanship is a lovely idea; when there's a possibility of real consensus between the parties, it's worth pursuing. But there's no such consensus today—not about how to make health care available to all and not even about whether making health care available to all is a worthwhile priority. Democrats have a choice: They can act on their own, or they can act not at all. ◆

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ART/DESIGN DIRECTION *Heroun+Co./Christine Car*
EDITORIAL-CORPORATE COORDINATOR *Linda Gerth*
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Crazy Train

The GOP welcomes the fringe on board.

JONATHAN CHAIT

I HAD AN UNUSUAL thought not long ago while I watched a video clip of a screaming man at a town hall accusing John Dingell of effectively planning the murder of his disabled son. As I watched, the idea struck me that it was legitimately impossible to determine if the man was crazy merely in the political sense—as in, *hoo boy, Rudy Giuliani's foreign policy ideas sure are crazy*—or crazy in the more literal sense of a person whose mental health issues render him frequently unable to function. It was a total jump ball which kind of crazy he was. The two senses of the word had finally merged.

Genuinely curious, I watched the man—Mike Sola of Milan, Michigan—give a television interview. Sola accused Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer of having sent thugs to his home in the middle of the night and threatened to personally use "lethal force" on the next wee-hour thug home invasion. How awful, I thought. Fox News is exploiting a mentally ill man.

But then I learned that Sola came to his deranged fear by traditional, ideological venues. He had read an op-ed in the *New York Post* by Betsy McCaughey, the right-wing fabulist, who falsely claimed that the House health care bill would require patients to attend end-of-life counseling. Reports of this had spread throughout the conservative media, mutated into even wilder fears of government euthanizing the old and sick, and presumably lodged themselves into Sola's apparently sane (by traditional medical standards) head.

What we are witnessing is the convergence of the mainstream Republican culture with the right-wing political subculture. Last year, the two remained clearly distinct. During the presidential election last fall, angry people began showing up at John McCain's rallies, screaming out various lunatic conspiracy theories. McCain reacted to these supporters with discomfort or puzzlement. Here he was accusing Obama of massive tax hikes or palling around with Bill Ayers, and attendees at his rallies were shouting about Obama being an Arab or plotting to destroy the country. McCain would squint his face as if to wonder, "What are these people *talking* about?"

Now, mainstream Republican leaders are reading from the same hymnal. You don't need to rely on poorly written, all-capital-letter e-mails for your lunatic conspiracy theories. You can get them straight from the GOP and its message organs.

What distinguishes the right-wing subculture is not that it relies on lies. The mainstream political culture does, too. But mainstream lies—John McCain wants to give special tax breaks to oil companies; Obama voted for kindergarten sex education—operate within the context of plausible assumptions about how government works. The lies of the right-wing subculture, on the other hand, incorporate fantastical beliefs.

Take, for instance, the now-famous hypothesis, dating back to the primaries, that Obama was actually born in Kenya and is thus ineligible for the presidency. To believe this, you need not only imagine that Obama covered up a disqualifying secret about his past (which is plausible) but that the state of Hawaii covered it up, and that Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and the entire Republican establishment chose to overlook publicly available information that would have guaranteed victory. Today's Republicans typically react to this theory by saying something like, "I believe Barack Obama is a citizen," as though they were extending him the benefit of the doubt in the absence of proof either way.

The "death panel" fantasy has come more recently and entails an even greater number of lunatic premises. It begins with the lie that voluntary end-of-life counseling—a procedure once supported by even conservative Republicans like Sarah Palin—would in fact be compulsory. From there, it adds the twist that senior citizens would be denied their actual wishes, and that the denial of care would then be extended to other weak members of society.

That last leap of logic owes much to the crank belief that contemporary liberalism shares important characteristics with Nazism. And the whole thing requires one to believe that this sinister plan would have made its way into the House bills with no objection from either Democrats or Republicans and without attracting any attention from the press. This has not stopped such respectable figures as Senator Charles Grassley from stoking fears ("You have every right to fear," he un-reassured one constituent).

As a countermeasure, the White House asked supporters to e-mail examples of such false rumors so that the administration could provide refutation. Naturally, this request itself turned into the subject of yet another bizarre rumor, this time that the White House was culling a list of enemies for unspecified retribution. GOP loyalists began to hammer home this fear: Columnist Charles Krauthammer compared Obama's e-mail request to "Chicago thug politics," Hugo Chávez, and Big Brother.

You could see why, in a dictatorship, this tactic could help the regime squelch critics. The crucial difference is that it only works if the critics are *hiding their views*. In the United States, sussing out critics does not help the party in power, which could more easily locate its opponents by, say, looking up publicly available lists of Republican contributors, or dialing Capitol Hill information and asking for the names of the House and Senate minority leaders.

Those Republicans embarrassed about the Birthers like to cite, in tit-for-tat fashion, the "Truthers," who thought George W. Bush was complicit in the September 11 attacks. They have excitedly circulated old polls showing that one-third of Democrats thought Bush "knew" about the attacks. But the parallel is misleading. First, the responses to the poll are not as crazy as they seem: Many or most of those responding affirmatively were probably thinking of the well-publicized revelation that Bush was warned of an Al Qaeda attack. And second, no mainstream Democrat has endorsed or sought to investigate Truther claims, which couldn't even get published on forums like *Daily Kos*.

Author Rick Perlstein recently noted that, during the Kennedy era, the government opened a mental health facility in Alaska, which a popular radio talk-show host persuaded millions of conservatives was actually a Soviet-style gulag. These days, come to think of it, the notion that large numbers of leading conservatives could be committed to mental health facilities is actually fairly plausible. ◆

TRB
From Washington

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The Mall

The Courtship

The story behind the Obama-Brooks bromance.

In the spring of 2005, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks arrived at then-Senator Barack Obama's office for a chat. Brooks, a conservative writer who joined the *Times* in 2003 from *The Weekly Standard*, had never met Obama before. But, as they chewed over the finer points of Edmund Burke, it didn't take long for the two men to click. "I don't want to sound like I'm bragging," Brooks recently told me, "but usually when I talk to senators, while they may know a policy area better than me, they generally don't know political philosophy better than me. I got the sense he knew *both* better than me."

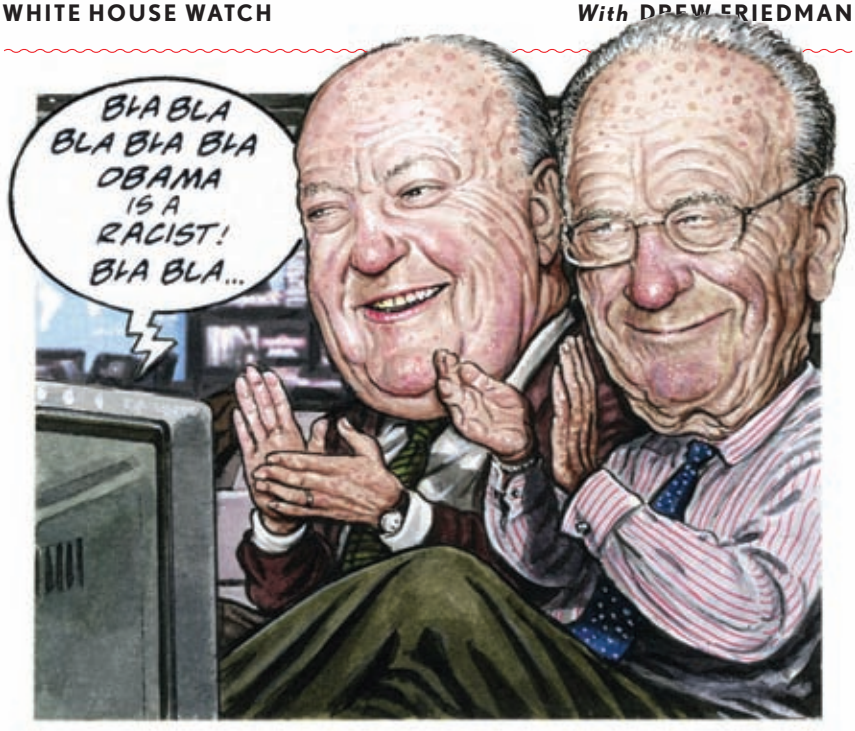
That first encounter is still vivid in Brooks's mind. "I remember distinctly an image of—we were sitting on his couches, and I was looking at his pant leg and his perfectly creased pant," Brooks says, "and I'm thinking, a) he's going to be president and b) he'll be a very good president." In the fall of 2006, two days after Obama's *The Audacity of Hope* hit bookstores, Brooks published a glowing *Times* column. The headline was "Run, Barack, Run."

These days, the center-right Brooks frequently seems more sympathetic toward Obama than the liberal Paul Krugman. He has written columns praising Obama's Afghanistan policy, education proposals, and economic team. Even on broad areas of disagreement—deficit spending, the sprawling stimulus bill, health care reform—Brooks tends to treat Obama and his administration with respect. "My overall view," Brooks told me, "is ninety-five percent of the decisions they make are good and intelligent. Whether I agree with them specifically, I think they're very serious and very good at what they do." It is an odd situation to say the least: David Brooks, prominent conservative, has become the most visible journalistic ally of arguably the most liberal president of his lifetime.

How did this happen? During the 1990s, Brooks was closely identified with national-greatness conservatism—a set of ideas that he touted in a widely discussed cover story for *The Weekly Standard*—which, in turn, was closely linked to the insurgent McCain campaign of 2000. But, whereas McCain and Bill Kristol (Brooks's boss at *The Weekly Standard*) eventually put aside the bitterness of that primary contest and returned to the loyal Republican fold, Brooks has kept a certain distance from movement conservatism. "David is a conservative who is motivated by a deep distrust of ideology," former Bush speechwriter Michael Gerson, a Brooks friend, says. "That is a strain of conservatism. It puts him in a position where he's not taking views simply because they fit a party line." Indeed, at Obama's much-talked-about January dinner with conservative pundits—hosted by George Will and attended by CNBC's Larry Kudlow, *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer, and *Wall Street Journal* editorial-page editor Paul Gigot, among others—the president greeted Brooks by asking, "What are you doing here?"

Brooks concedes that his place on the political spectrum has shifted somewhat over the years. "I used to think conservatives were right about the big things—the Soviet Union, economic growth," he explains. "Now, on a lot of issues, I think liberals have been right about some big things, like rising inequality. Both sides of the education divide are within the Democratic Party. … The Republicans are sitting this one out. And, then, the war in Iraq

WHITE HOUSE WATCH *With* DREW FRIEDMAN



Ailes and Murdoch laugh all the way to the bank.

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has caused me to rethink things in a much more modest [way], and that is Burkean, too."

He recognizes something similar in the current president. "Obama sees himself as a Burkean," Brooks says. "He sees his view of the world as a view that understands complexity and the organic nature of change." Moreover, after the Bush years, Brooks seems relieved to have an intellectual in the White House again. "I divide people into people who talk like us and who don't talk like us," he explains. "Of recent presidents, Clinton could sort of talk like us, but Obama is definitely—you could see him as a *New Republic* writer. He can do the jurisprudence, he can do the political philosophy, and he can do the politics. I think he's more talented than anyone in my lifetime. I mean, he *is* pretty dazzling when he walks into a room. So, that's why it's important he doesn't fuck this up."

White House officials have gone out of their way to cater to Brooks recently. Take Obama's senior adviser, David Axelrod, whose career Brooks kept a close eye on after he graduated from the University of Chicago in 1983 and took a job at the City News Bureau, a Chicago wire service. At the time, Axelrod was the lead City Hall reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*. "I followed his career because he was who I wanted to be," Brooks told me. "He was a hero." The two finally crossed paths in 2004, when Axelrod was working for John Edwards. And, this April, as the keynote speaker at *The Week* magazine's opinion awards ceremony—where Brooks was honored—Axelrod showered the columnist with praise, calling him a "serious public thinker" in an era of "insipid, instant commentary and one-hour news cycles."

Last month, I met Brooks for lunch at Equinox, a few blocks north of the White House. That morning, he had published an unusually harsh column criticizing what he saw as Democratic overreach on health care and the stimulus. Already, he had heard from administration officials complaining about the piece. But "they're always nice," Brooks said, adding, "It's never, 'You're a complete asshole.' My line is, the Clinton people would tell you you're a complete and total asshole. The Obama people say, 'We love you. You're a great guy. It's sad you're a complete and total asshole.' They're always very mature about it."

Comrade David Brooks

A similar thing happened in early March, when chief of staff Rahm Emanuel called Brooks to complain about that morning's column criticizing Obama's spending programs; later in the day, the White House sent over a chart showing that spending was, in fact, holding to historical norms. Brooks told me that Obama had personally signed the chart "Dear Comrade Brooks." In June, *The Washington Post* reported that Emanuel had arranged for Obama to "drop by" a briefing Brooks attended. "I feel like I can call anybody," Brooks says of his access to top White House officials such as Emanuel, Axelrod, and Office of Management and Budget head Peter Orszag. "With Bush, there were months when I was in favor, and months when I was out of favor. Here, you can write whatever you want; you don't notice any diminution. If I call Rahm or Orszag or Axelrod, they're happy to talk."

Brooks isn't blind to the fact that the White House goes out of its way to flatter him. This spring, he told Charlie Rose, "David Axelrod walks into a meeting with me, carrying the *Reflections On The Revolution In France* by Edmund Burke. They're not without manipulation." It's easy to understand why the administration does this. Brooks's sympathetic columns help to validate the key myth of this White House: that it is fundamentally post-partisan. Plus, Brooks appeals to a major Obama constituency: the latté-sipping Baby Boomers who were the subject of his 2000 best-seller *Bobos in Paradise*. These were among Obama's strongest supporters in the last election, but their loyalty could be tested by spiraling deficits, botched health care reform, or a flagging economy.

As much as any columnist, Brooks speaks to these left-of-center suburbanites. After all, he is known for attracting liberal readers who normally can't stand conservative pundits. "I get a lot of people who say, 'I'm a liberal and you're the only one I read,'" Brooks says. "Sometimes, it can be a little condescending. … But you take the readers where you can get them. I do wish more people walked up to me and said, 'I'm a conservative and I love you.' But, mostly, they don't read the *Times*."

GABRIEL SHERMAN

The King and O

Abdullah gives Obama a necklace … and little else.

AT A WORLD economic summit in London this April, Barack Obama had his first encounter with the king of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz. With TV cameras rolling, Obama strode up to the elderly Saudi monarch, extended his hand, and smiled broadly as he bent at the waist in a swift but unmistakable bow. As the image rocketed around the Internet, the White House was quick to insist that the move had not been one of supplication. "It wasn't a bow," one aide told *Politico* at the time. Obama had simply lowered his head in conjunction with the handshake because "he's taller than King Abdullah," the aide said.

The explanation was totally implausible. But Obama's (presumably instinctive) gesture was understandable. Perhaps no one is more important to the success of his foreign policy agenda than the king. Consider the list: Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Guantánamo, terrorism, the global economy, Middle East peace—on each of these issues, the Saudis play a vital role. "Saudi Arabia is a nexus," says

Department of Corrections

In "Doubt" (August 12), Charlie Ebersol was quoted as saying that "there isn't a gray area" in the case of Leopold Munyakazi. In fact, he was referring to Rwanda's genocide. We regret the error.

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one administration official. "It's a big deal on everything."

That's why Obama has put considerable work into building a rapport with Abdullah. In addition to the London meeting, he has spoken to the king at least twice via telephone, and, the day before his June 4 speech in Cairo, he visited Abdullah's farm outside Riyadh, where the king hung a gaudy gold necklace around the bemused president's neck before the two held private talks. George W. Bush, by contrast, didn't travel to the kingdom until 2008 and had just four state visits with Abdullah in eight years. "The king is old school," says a senior White House official. "He likes to do things face-to-face. For him, it all begins and ends with the personal relationship. Before you can get to the substance, you have to work on that relationship."

Obama and Abdullah may be off to a cordial start personally. Substantively, however, the U.S.-Saudi relationship threatens to become a debacle—one that could drag Obama's foreign policy down with it. While the White House disputes reports that the Riyadh meeting went poorly, in Obama's first seven months, the kingdom has stymied or stalled administration efforts on multiple fronts—from the peace process to Iraq to Guantánamo. The White House is scrambling to win cooperation and avoid affront, but, in the end, the problem may simply be that Obama needs the Saudis more than they need him.

At the moment, nothing bedevils the relationship quite like the Middle East peace process. On July 31, the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal, met with Hillary Clinton at the State Department. Roughly two weeks earlier, Clinton had delivered a major foreign policy address featuring a noteworthy passage that emphasized the "responsibility" of Arab nations to "take steps to improve relations with Israel." The language was meant to balance Obama's emphasis on an Israeli settlement freeze and was a reference to confidence-building measures that Arab states could take, such as granting El Al airlines overflight rights, opening business offices in Tel Aviv, and granting interviews to Israeli journalists.

But, when Clinton met the press with Faisal, who has a trim gray beard and often eschews his country's flowing white robes for Western business suits, it was clear the two were on very different pages: "Incrementalism and a step-by-step approach has not and, we believe, will not lead to peace," Faisal said. Instead, he called for "a comprehensive approach,"

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like one proposed in the Saudi-backed 2002 Arab League peace initiative, which focuses on final-status issues like borders, refugees, and the fate of Jerusalem. Speaking in a polite tone that was at odds with his striking rebuke of Clinton, Faisal said that Israel is "shifting attention from the core issue … to incidental issues such as academic conferences and civil aviation matters." Israel, he concluded, "must decide if it wants real peace," or else "lead the region into a maelstrom of instability and violence." It was, says Rachel Bronson, a Saudi expert at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, "an unbelievable statement … those were very harsh remarks."

The rebuke should hardly have come as a surprise. Abdullah, who has been king since 2005 (and de facto ruler since his predecessor, King Fahd, had a severe stroke a decade ago), is said to be personally obsessed with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The king made that clear to George W. Bush when the two met for the first time in Crawford, Texas, in 2002, and he convinced the president to have his aides download and print out photos of Palestinian civilian casualties. "Their default position is to be the caboose on the peace train, not the engine," says Martin Indyk, a former ambassador to Israel and State Department official during the Clinton administration.

Obama may need the Saudis more than they need him.

According to some reports, Obama had hoped to pry peace-process concessions from the Saudis during his visit to Riyadh and was upset when he failed. One former top Bush administration official says such intransigence would be no surprise: "If you lined up fifty people from the Bush administration and asked what the president was going to get from a visit to Saudi Arabia, they would say 'nothing.'" But White House officials insist that Obama never expected specific commitments from his meeting with Abdullah. "It was really more of an investment" in the personal relationship, says a senior White House official. The official, just one of four people present other than the two leaders, also disputed reports that the king had disrespectfully lectured Obama about Israel: "I have been in many meetings with heads of state, and I know what a good meeting looks like—and this was a good meeting."

Even if Obama was tempted to butt heads with the king about the peace process, however, he may have felt compelled to hold his tongue. Obama needs Saudi assistance on multiple fronts. Take Guantánamo, whose closure by the start of next year will almost certainly require a major assist from the Saudis. That's because the kingdom appears to be the only realistic destination for dozens of the roughly 100 Yemeni nationals currently in U.S. custody, many of whom express militant anti-Western views. Once in Saudi Arabia, they would likely be enrolled in the country's terrorist-rehabilitation program. This effort is being spearheaded by White House counterterrorism adviser John Brennan, who, as a former CIA station chief in Riyadh, is probably the Obama team's most trusted line to the royal family. In March, Brennan met with Abdullah in Saudi Arabia and toured their terrorist-rehabilitation facility. Reports have circulated for months that the Saudis were close to accepting several Yemenis, and one well-informed source outside the administration says Brennan believed he had a deal after his last visit (a claim the White House denies). Regardless, the negotiations are creeping along with no imminent breakthrough in sight—and with only four months remaining until Gitmo is supposed to close.

Perhaps even more important to Obama is Saudi cooperation on Iran. The Obama team is well-aware that the Sunni-dominated kingdom views the rising influence of Shia Iran with a combination of fear and loathing. "The first thing [the Saudis] think about when it comes to regional politics is the contest for influence with Iran. Everything gets filtered through that lens," says F. Gregory Gause III, a Saudi expert at the University of Vermont. That's why administration officials believe Riyadh can be enlisted to help block Tehran's nuclear ambitions. In their recent book, *Myths, Illusions & Peace*, Obama's Iran point man, Dennis Ross, and his co-author, David Makovsky, argue that the Saudis should leverage their massive financial holdings in Europe against Tehran—privately telling key banking, investment, and energy companies on the Continent that "those who cut all ties to the Iranians would be rewarded by the Saudis," while those who don't will lose business. Similarly, Ross—who himself met with Abdullah earlier this year—proposes that the Saudis press the Chinese, who have developed major ties to the kingdom's oil industry, to take a harder line against Iran, lest they miss out on future opportunities for petrol profits. But, however much the Saudis may want to check Iran, Abdullah may be wary of aligning himself too closely with the United States and Israel against another Muslim nation. "It's an open question whether [the Gulf Arab] countries would be willing to join a very tough sanctions regime," says Nicholas Burns, who handled the issue for the Bush State Department.

The list of fraught subjects goes on—as evidenced by the parade of senior Obama officials who have jetted into Saudi Arabia in recent months. In July, it was Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, concerned about the role of oil prices, as well as the hundreds of billions of dollars in U.S. currency reserves the Saudis are believed to hold, in the global economic recovery. In May, it was Defense Secretary Robert Gates seeking Saudi assistance in Pakistan. (The Saudis have cultural and military ties to Sunni Pakistan, as well as contacts within the Sunni Taliban movement. In late 2008, Abdullah hosted a summit in Mecca bringing Afghan government officials together

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with Taliban representatives in a failed bid at reconciliation.) Later that month, Richard Holbrooke, Obama's envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, had an audience with the king and the Saudi intelligence chief. Meanwhile, Obama officials are also pushing the Saudis to help integrate Iraq into regional politics by dispatching an ambassador there, a move the Saudis—resentful at the rise of a Shia regime in Baghdad—have been reluctant to make.

Amid all these requests, it should come as no surprise that the Obama administration is giving back to the Saudis when it can. Earlier this year, the Justice Department filed a Supreme Court brief backing the Saudi royals in their opposition to a lawsuit by several families of September 11 victims that are seeking damages from Saudi princes with financial links to Al Qaeda.

Administration officials insist that the Saudis are doing more than meets the eye. Riyadh has spent millions supporting Lebanon's pro-western Sunni political bloc in its struggle with Hezbollah. The Saudis also provide Washington with important cooperation on counterterrorism, including a recent crackdown on domestic financing of radical groups (even though Saudi-based funding for the Taliban remains a major concern for the Obama administration). "The relationship has improved dramatically" in recent years, says a top White House official. And the White House is eager to tout Abdullah's recent agreement to send $200 million to the Palestinian Authority—a move the White House calls significant given that the Saudis have generally resisted the U.S.-Israeli strategy of bolstering the PA while blockading Hamas. One senior official describes this funding as "a deliverable" from Obama's June trip to Riyadh. Critics, however, say the sum is puny compared to funding pledges the Saudis have made in the past.

For Obama, the core problem may be that Abdullah doesn't need to cater to the new American president. It's true that the Saudis fear Iran and welcome U.S. efforts to stop its nuclear program. But the Saudis are equally suspicious that Obama will cut a deal with Tehran that leaves Riyadh feeling more threatened than ever by Shia power. At the same time, the industrialization of China and India means that the Saudis have plenty of other customers for their oil. And, if there's anything that motivates Abdullah and his kin above all else, it is fear of an uprising by the Saudi "street." That means that the Saudis will always take care to champion—and demagogue—the Palestinian cause, making them difficult partners in pursuing Middle East peace. With his fiery speech at Hillary Clinton's side last month, says Rachel Bronson, Prince Faisal "was making it clear that Obama can't assume that, just by showing American good intentions, the Saudis are going to start dealing the way the Americans want them to. Showing up and talking to the king, that's great. But they are going to have to be really involved, and working on the hard issues." It's going to take a lot more than a bow, in other words.

Michael Crowley

Drug Deal

How Big Pharma extorted the White House.

"We'll have the negotiations televised on C-SPAN," then-presidential candidate Barack Obama explained, "so that people can see who is making arguments on behalf of their constituents, and who are making arguments on behalf of the drug companies or the insurance companies."

Those were heady times. It was September 2008, at a town hall in Virginia, where Obama was offering a preview of how he intended to conduct his presidency. He would change the way Washington works, make it transparent, and, in so doing, deliver what the American public needed—starting with affordable health insurance. But, just a few months later, Obama's team was doing exactly what he said his administration wouldn't do: negotiating behind closed doors. The subject, sure enough, was health reform. The partner was the drug industry. By June, they had a deal.

Exactly who agreed to what has been the subject of some controversy, even among parties to the negotiation. But the basics are not really in dispute. The drug industry promised to endorse reform, including initiatives that would reduce its bottom line by up to $80 billion over ten years. In return, the administration—and one of its key Senate allies—agreed to stop at $80 billion, at least as far as the drug industry was concerned.

It's the kind of quid pro quo that generally raises eyebrows, as more than one conservative was quick to note: "The press and congressional Dems would have gone nuts if we had tried anything remotely like this," said Tevi Troy, who was a health care official in the Bush administration. And, in fact, a few congressional Democrats *have* gone nuts. "We have all been focused on the debate in Congress, but perhaps the deal has already been cut," Representative Raúl Grijalva, co-chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, told *The New York Times*, which first broke the story. Beyond Capitol Hill, the reaction from liberals was even harsher. "When an industry gets secret concessions out of the White House in return for a promise to lend the industry's support to a key piece of legislation, we're in big trouble," former Labor Secretary Robert Reich wrote on his blog. "That's called extortion."

Extortion is a harsh word, but not an inaccurate one. By almost any reckoning, the drug industry demanded—and got—a sweetheart deal in exchange for its support. But were Obama and his allies wrong to go along with it? Not necessarily—at least, not if they really wanted to pass health reform. Good government and good policy make for great speeches. But, in the real world, they're not always so compatible.

The lineage of the deal with PhRMA, the drug-industry trade group, traces back to before Obama was even elected president. In the fall of 2008, representatives of the entire health care industry—pharmaceutical manufacturers, insurers, doctors, hospitals, device-makers—began holding regular meetings with key staff on Capitol Hill. The two senators leading the discussions, Ted Kennedy and later Max Baucus, made no secret of their mission. Instead of trying to fight these industries head on, they hoped to come up with a consensus version that at least some of the industries could live with, if not support outright. Once Obama took office, the conversation turned more concrete. Obama and his allies wanted to wring savings out of the health care system, in order to finance coverage expansions, and, over the long run, make medical care less expensive. Which industries, they asked, were prepared to help—to sacrifice some short-term earnings in order to make reform possible?

The drug industry was first in line, according to several sources familiar with the discussions. But its list of demands was long. It strongly opposed letting the federal government negotiate directly with drug companies over price, the way governments in other countries do; it didn't want to give the government rebates on drugs it purchased for Medicare recipients; and it didn't want to let Americans buy cheaper drugs overseas.

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All three positions ran counter to Democratic Party orthodoxy. (Later, the industry made clear its opposition to a public insurance option, as well.) Pressed to give up something, the drug-industry officials indicated that they would be willing to put up with several other changes designed to reduce its revenues—like giving the government a larger rebate on drugs purchased for Medicaid recipients—but only to the extent they reduced revenues by $50 billion over ten years. Anything more, they said, was unacceptable.

Neither the staff of Baucus's Senate Finance Committee, which had been leading the discussion with PhRMA, nor officials from the administration, who had since joined the talks, were thrilled with this offer, according to people with close knowledge of the negotiations. For one thing, the administration and Baucus believed the drug industry would ultimately *make* money from reform, since more people with insurance coverage was bound to mean more people buying drugs. (PhRMA countered these arguments with a dubious analysis arguing that reform would not mean much new business, partly because most of the newly insured would be relatively healthy and thus need few drugs.) Obama and his allies also thought $50 billion over ten years just wasn't a lot of money, particularly for an industry that has consistently ranked among the most profitable in the country. They had a bigger number in mind—something closer to $100 billion.

A breakthrough finally came when Obama and his allies indicated they wanted to fill in the "donut hole"—the gap in coverage for seniors who opt for Medicare drug coverage. At that point, the drug industry volunteered to sell its name-brand drugs at a discount to consumers, worth about $30 billion over ten years. It wasn't much of a sacrifice for the industry; the discounts would come almost entirely out of new drug sales, not existing ones. But it helped seal the deal.

It took a while for the terms of the arrangement to get out. The initial White House announcement, issued this June, was bland and vague: It merely indicated that PhRMA was giving up $80 billion in revenue to make reform possible. But, in August, PhRMA president Billy Tauzin—apparently nervous that House liberals were pressing for reforms that would reduce drug-industry profits more deeply—gave more details to *The New York Times*. The deal, he made clear, was to limit drug-industry exposure: Reform would not reduce pharmaceutical profits by more than $80 billion. White House Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina subsequently confirmed that that was the administration's understanding, as well. Additional details subsequently appeared in *The Huffington Post* and *The Atlantic*, although different sources offered slightly different versions of what Baucus and the White House promised.

✳ Check out Jonathan Cohn's blog for more on the politics of health care. **THE TREATMENT** at www.tnr.com

While some conservatives were unhappy that PhRMA conceded anything—in an open letter, House Minority Leader John Boehner recently accused Tauzin of "appeasing" the administration and its allies—it was on the left where dismay was most vocal. But, inside the administration and on Capitol Hill, even those critical of the deal's terms say it may have been necessary, given PhRMA's clout. As proof, they point to what happened when two congressional committees—Senator Kennedy's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) and Representative Henry Waxman's Energy and Commerce—took up their own versions of reform in July. In the HELP deliberations, several Democrats joined with Republicans to reject a proposal that would have let people buy drugs from Canada and Mexico. During the Energy and Commerce Committee mark-up, a similarly bipartisan coalition voted to give the makers of biological drugs the right to sell their wares exclusively for twelve years—more than the administration and Waxman thought necessary. In both cases, PhRMA got exactly what it wanted. Says one senior congressional staffer working on health legislation, "No matter how much high-handed talk there is [in Congress] of reining in PhRMA, in the end, they always get their way."

To be sure, the administration and its allies did get something more than tens of billion toward the cost of health care reform. They also got the drug industry's advertising support, which is no small thing at a time when the right has been running roughshod over reform. PhRMA's pro-reform advertising may be generic and, in the final analysis, not particularly helpful. But, the plan's defenders argue, it's still better than ads amplifying lies about "death panels." Besides, it's not as if the administration and its allies can't seek more concessions from PhRMA later on—a possibility the White House itself seemed to encourage, after the August *Times* report, by pointing out that the deal was only about health care reform legislation and not future acts of Congress.

Making some initial compromises in the hopes of revisiting them later is not a far-fetched idea. The people who engineered the original Medicare Act promised that the program would pay doctors their "usual and customary fees." They also handed responsibility for administering payments over to the Blue Cross plans, which had close ties to the hospitals. This helped pacify both physicians and hospitals (although the American Medical Association fought Medicare to the end). Years later, as Medicare's price tag soared, the federal government reduced physician and hospital payments, effectively bringing to the program the sort of cost control that ideally would have been there in the first place. It wasn't the cleanest, most open way to pass and then modify legislation. But that's what it took to get the program up and running. Four decades later, passing comprehensive health reform may require the same kind of unpleasant compromises. As one disappointed congressional staffer puts it, the drug-industry bargain "is offensive—and brash, and tacky, and very PhRMA." But, the staffer added, "the legislative process is messy."

Jonathan Cohn

Dead Wrong

Sarah Palin, meet Hippocrates.

As if you hadn't heard, a gaggle of American conservatives is stridently charging that pending health care reform legislation will institute a mechanism for euthanizing selected members of the handicapped and elderly populations—that it would, in Sarah Palin's formulation, establish "death panels." It's true that H.R. 3200, the bill that will eventually come before the House of Representatives, is still a work in progress. It has already been amended by three separate House committees, while two Senate committees are working on drafts of their own. All of the provisions to be included in the final bill are not yet known, but one thing is certain: There is not a single statement in the voluminous number of pages under study that contains the slightest consideration, no matter its remoteness, of death panels, euthanasia, or any such fearsome concept.

In reality, the legislation simply calls for the reimbursement of physicians who counsel patients on end-of-life decision-making—counseling that is already required by a 1990 law and that

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Obama's health care plan, as perceived by the ignorant, the nefarious, and the just plain stupid.

ANTHONY RUSSO

is now covered by many insurance plans. But the specifics of the present bill are irrelevant to the loony conversation the right has sparked during the August recess. After all, even if there were some provision before Congress that could conceivably be interpreted as establishing a "death panel," centuries, if not millennia, of established medical ethics (in addition to existing U.S. law) would prevent its actualization. In the midst of this crucial debate on the future of health care, somehow, the proponents of the euthanasia talking point seem to have forgotten everything we know about the practice of medicine in America.

EVEN PUTTING ASIDE the Judeo-Christian morality upon which the Constitution and our nation's culture are based, the notion of forced euthanasia would contradict the long-held body of medical ethics to which all American doctors must adhere. At times, morality can be dismissed as a matter of personal conscience, no matter how widespread its acceptance. Ethics, on the other hand, arises from societal or group commitments to principia of behavior. A formulated code of ethical precepts—whether philosophical, legal, or religious—is a statement of commitment that the group has a right to insist upon from its members, even to the point of punishing breaches.

Since its origin in the works authored by followers of Hippocratic teaching, the ethics of Western medicine have forbidden any action that might harm a patient, hence the famous injunction: "[H]ave two special objects in view with regard to disease, namely, to do good or to do no harm." That principle has been reiterated again and again through the ages, as, for example, in the words of the Geneva Convention Code of Medical Ethics, adopted by the World Medical Association in 1949, which states, in part, "The health of my patient will be my first consideration," and elsewhere, "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life … I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity." I know of no source that permits anything else.

Moreover, as the modern discipline of bioethics has evolved since the 1960s, there has been universal acceptance among its authorities of four principles that are considered fundamental: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. The principle of autonomy, which refers to the autonomy of the patient, directs that every individual has the free-willed authority to make well-informed medical decisions for himself and that the physician must never dictate such decisions. In the words of a highly regarded textbook of bioethics, "This implies a respectful and broadly rational dialogue between doctor and patient, in order to combine the patient's values and the doctor's expertise to produce benefit. For this to happen, the patient and the doctor must be prepared to listen to each other, think about what is being said, and be responsible about their respective roles." As for beneficence, non-maleficence (the "do no harm" of antiquity), and justice, the words speak for themselves. Death panels indeed! Euthanasia indeed!

The growing professional disciplines of medical ethics and bioethics have had a profound impact on researchers, bedside doctors, associations of physicians, and government. The President's Council on Bioethics, a carefully chosen committee of some of the field's most eminent members, was created to advise the executive branch on any and all issues for which guidance is needed. Furthermore, the much-maligned American Medical Association, a strong supporter of H.R. 3200, has urged President Obama to publicly recognize the code of ethics that governs the actions of physicians.

Even if some wild-eyed legislator, special interest group, or purposeful troublemaker were to ignore the personal ethical behavior that has long been among individual and organized medicine's strongest influences, no bill could legally include any deadly provision of the kind being bruited about. In 1990, responding to several high-profile court cases—notably, those of Karen Ann Quinlan and Nancy Cruzan, two young women in deep and irreversible comas who were kept on life support for unconscionably long periods, even as their families petitioned for cessation month after month—Congress mandated that any health care institution receiving Medicare or Medicaid funding (which means all but a very few acute and chronic care hospitals) must, on admission, provide patients with three statements: one

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outlining their right to accept or refuse any type of treatment; another laying out their right to issue advance directives to ensure that their wishes about continuing life-sustaining therapy be carried out; and a third explaining any policies that govern the institution's withholding or withdrawal of life-supportive treatments.

Though the purpose of the 1990 legislation was to ascertain that hospitalized patients would not be maintained on ultimately futile therapies, such as ventilators or feeding tubes, against their stated wishes, it also forbids anything resembling forced euthanasia, since the patient (or, in the case of incompetence, his or her legally authorized surrogate) by definition would not have requested it. Regardless, fulfilling such a request would be illegal if it were made in any of the 48 states that do not have an assisted-suicide law. And, even in the other two—Oregon and Washington—assisted suicide would certainly be viewed by the authorities as quite a different thing than forced euthanasia.

In order for patients to make knowledgeable decisions under the 1990 law, it is essential that they thoroughly discuss with their physicians the implications of the directives they are choosing, such as "do not resuscitate" orders. H.R. 3200 would, for the first time, legislate that the physician receive a fee for these discussions, making it more likely that they will take place and that they will be of real substance. From these provisions of the bill, the ignorant, the nefarious, and the just plain stupid have extrapolated that the purpose of the periodic consultations is really to determine life or death, with government officials and even physicians—heaven forfend—taking on the role of Dr. Mengele. It is ironic that the very legislation designed to protect patient autonomy is that from which Sarah Palin and her ilk have derived the fantastical notion that her son, Trig, who has Down syndrome, would be euthanized if H.R. 3200 were passed.

Even if such a gruesome threat were real, the combination of morality, ethics, and the law would stop it early in its malodorous tracks. The entire issue—or non-issue, which it surely is—contains the ingredients of travesty unworthy not only of the attention of the bioethics community, but of the general public as well.

SHERWIN B. NULAND

Sherwin B. Nuland, the author of HOW WE DIE, *is Clinical Professor of Surgery at Yale University and a member of the Executive Committee of The Yale Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics.*

AP/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

Do we really have to accompany the Obamas on their date nights?

Kiss and Tell

Should Barack and Michelle lay off the PDA?

THE MAY EVENING was lovely, and the couple couldn't resist taking a stroll. Dinner had been quite the production—two hours at one of the city's poshest restaurants. Now, both seemed in need of a little together-time before reentering the loud, bright chaos of kids, pet, and messages from the office. So, rather than head straight into the house, they drifted slowly down their driveway and out into the yard, arms brushing now and again with the easy intimacy of the long married. His collar was undone, and his hands were tucked casually into his pockets. The tie of her white blouse wrapped around her back and dangled past the hem of her black capri pants to tickle her calves. Her sexy black heels (no sensible mom shoes tonight!) seemed to throw her a little off-balance. Approaching the children's swing set, she reached to take his hand. Around them, the gathering twilight was alive with songbirds and the occasional chirping cricket. And, if you listened ever so closely, from way back near the house could be heard the

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gentle rustle of cameras and reporters documenting the pair's every move.

The Obamas had just returned from a "date night" in Georgetown. It was a strikingly public affair, with everything from cocktail choices to accessories reported in excruciating detail, and footage from the post-dinner promenade quickly going global on YouTube. Yet the event was not the highest profile instance of public romancing by the presidential lovebirds. That honor goes to their New York date a few weeks later, which sparked national debate over the propriety of the president firing up Air Force One to take his wife to dinner and a show in the thick of a recession. There have also been smaller moments, like the scene in NBC's "Inside the Obama White House" where Michelle and First Dog Bo, cruising the corridors with anchor Brian Williams, crossed paths with the president, prompting a kissy-voiced greeting from her and a quick smooch from him. Or recall Michelle's welcoming remarks at an event preceding the White House luau, during which she broke into a hip-wiggling mini-hula that spurred her man, brows shooting skyward, to do a grinning double take and tease, "Try that again?" Which she did.

The barriers between public and private have long been eroding, and every modern president has had to deal with the resulting overexposure. Something, however, feels different this time around. While previous First Couples have accepted intrusions into their personal lives, they have appeared to do so reluctantly, and only at the prodding of a relentless media. The Obamas, by contrast, seem almost eager to make their private life, especially the romantic bits, part of the national conversation. It's unquestionably entertaining. But is it a good idea?

There are obvious political advantages to spotlighting the First Marriage. For this president, specifically, it counters criticism of him as a pointy-headed academic or "philosopher king." For the nation's first black president, more generally, the portrait of a doting husband helps dispel both the too-exotic and the scary-black-man factors. Similarly, all the connubial canoodling eases lingering stereotypes of Michelle as a ball-breaking feminist or angry black woman. And, most broadly, with political sex scandals popping up all over (and unpleasant memories of Bill Clinton lingering) anything that makes this strapping young Democrat look enamored of his lawfully wedded wife is good for the party.

The most immediate political risk is that critics, not to mention a bloodthirsty press corps, are typically quick to slam public officials for cynically exploiting their personal lives. The Obamas, however, enjoy an edge: Voters are inclined to cut them slack in part because everyone is so thrilled to have a nice black family serving as role models. People are actively charmed and hopeful (and relieved) whenever the Obamas telegraph their Huxtable-esque wholesomeness to a black America whose family troubles are all too frequently in the news. They see in the effort an admirable, even noble motive. Also, on a more intimate level, we see the POTUS working through some childhood demons: He wants to be both the hands-on father and the attentive husband his dad never was. The White House is happy to promote this angle as well. (Witness Obama's Father's Day essay in *Parade*.) So, even if we suspect there might be an exploitative element at work, we don't see cheap politics as the main storyline.

Political calculations aside, the Obamas seem to genuinely believe they are making a difference to black America by conducting their marriage so publicly. Michelle is continually pitching herself as a role model, reminding young people at schools and community centers across the globe of her modest roots and improbable success, while stressing that they too have limitless potential. It is a message she is clearly eager to convey, fighting whatever low expectations non-affluent minority children in particular may hold for their futures. As she urged in a January interview on the African American–targeted network TV One: "For all the parents out there, have your date nights. It's important for kids to know their parents are connecting." Sure, Michelle could have avoided snippets of her love life being posted on the Web—but, then, she and Barack and the girls couldn't prominently model the Perfect Black Family.

The flip side is that there are invariably personal costs to this degree of exposure, especially for the First Lady. People are always talking about the stress and strain of being the president's wife, of functioning as some bizarre, quasi-official, brutally scrutinized symbol of American womanhood. And, already, there are signs that Michelle could use some breathing room. This summer, *The Washington Post* suggested in a profile that she was feeling constrained by the public fascination with her every move. (The East Wing was apparently surprised when pics of her walking Bo in shorts wound up on the Web almost instantaneously.) Her days off don't allow her any real privacy, and her plan is to get the girls out of town whenever she can for a little more freedom. This relentless sense of being under a microscope can only be exacerbated by having her most intimate relationship publicly dissected.

Not that the Obamas have an alternative at this point. Having OKed First Coupledom as an appropriate topic of national discourse, any move to change the rules would provoke howls of protest. One can only hope the political and social benefits are indeed worth it. Because, on a personal level, there are sure to be moments when the Obamas will regret the decision they have made. Keeping the spontaneity and spark alive is tough in any marriage. Managing it with a pack of tittering journalists trailing along will take a freaking miracle.

Michelle Cottle

Eastern Promises

The detainees we sent to Albania.

In June, when four Uighur detainees at Guantánamo were released to Bermuda, the media's portrayal of their story served as both distraction and palliative: Articles in many papers were written as though the United States had rescued members of an oppressed minority in China and delivered them to a tropical paradise. *The New York Times* wrote that the men "expressed wonder at their good fortune" and "basked in their new-found freedom," while "smelling hibiscus flowers" and "marveling at the serene beauty." Photographs accompanying the article showed the husky, bushy-bearded men strolling alongside azure waters, splashing in the waves, and licking double-scoop ice cream cones.

But the real story of the Uighur detainees is to be found in the unsavory history of Guantánamo in the run-up to the Iraq War. There, men who, in their fight against Chinese oppression, had looked to the United States with hope, fell victim to a cynical diplomatic betrayal, a corruption of justice that a Bush administration deputy assistant secretary of state has called "nothing short of 'tragic' " and for which even a congressman who supports enhanced interrogation has expressed "deep sadness and regret."

When I met Abubakker Qassim, one of the former Uighur detainees, he was arranging slices of cured pink meat on an extra-large, American-style pie in the kitchen of Pizza Vllaznia Hallall (meaning, roughly, "Halal Pizza Fraternity") on

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a steamy July day in the Albanian capital, Tirana. A stocky, youthful 40-year-old with a round face and a warm smile, he greeted me in between filling orders, apologizing for his flour-caked outstretched hand.

Everyone at the restaurant—women in abayas and others in miniskirts; long-bearded men with ankle-length pants, and cleanly shaven ones in designer sunglasses and muscle tees—seemed to adore the pizza chef, whose name they pronounced, fittingly for his new profession, "Abu Baker." As he unloaded one cooked pizza after another, two waiters stopped separately at my table to praise his industriousness, and a woman in a hijab confided that he is a "very, very good man." Through a translator, Abubakker told me he was eager to share his story and suggested that we meet on his day off.

Abubakker Qassim (right), a Uighur, is a former U.S. prisoner at Guantánamo.

At the much-emptied pizzeria early the next morning, Abubakker, joined by a fellow Uighur and former detainee named Akhtar Qassim Basit, recounted his tale, rarely betraying the slightest emotion. It began with his arrest during a Chinese crackdown in his home region of Xinjiang, known among Uighur separatists as East Turkestan. Released from prison after seven months, Abubakker says he witnessed greater Chinese enforcement of bans on male beards, female headscarves, mosque attendance by minors, and bearing more than two children (though he was able, he confides with a smile, to have three: "They can't do anything about twins!"). Seeking religious freedom and more gainful employment, he crossed the border to Kyrgyzstan and planned to work at a Uighur-owned leather factory in Turkey. On his way, he traveled through Pakistan and a Uighur village in Afghanistan, where he arrived in July 2001. Though he asserts that he went there only to wait for a visa, he testified in a U.S. military hearing that, in exchange for room and board, he had trained there "for a future fight against the Chinese government."

Some three months after his arrival, he recalled, bombs fell on the village. (Abubakker said emphatically that he had no idea whose military aircraft were flying above him: "We didn't know about September 11 until we were in Guantánamo.") Abubakker, Akhtar, and 16 Uighurs hid for weeks in nearby caves in Tora Bora before trekking through snowy mountains to Pakistan, where Shia villagers deceived them with a warm welcome and then sold them to the Pakistani authorities for a bounty of $5,000 each. (America had offered rewards for turning in Al Qaeda suspects.)

Once the Uighurs were transferred to American custody, Abubakker said, the detainees were reassured that their arrest had been a mistake: "The Americans . . . said that they had come to Afghanistan for Al Qaeda and that they had no problem with Uighurs. . . . They asked us for information about China and promised us they would not share it with the Chinese"—pledges that he said were repeated after the men were transferred to Guantánamo, six months later.

But these promises quickly evaporated. At the time of Abubakker's capture, in December 2001, the United States denied China's request for custody of the Uighur detainees and refused to link Uighur separatists to the global war on terrorism. But, as military action against Iraq loomed, and the United States faced the possibility that China's representative on the United Nations Security Council would veto any such action, U.S. policy toward the Uighurs changed. In the last week of August 2002, as President Bush prepared to make his case for confronting Iraq to the U.N., Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage traveled to China where, in addition to presenting his hosts with grounds for toppling Saddam Hussein, he announced that the United States was acceding to China's demand to label an obscure Uighur group, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, a terrorist organization.

The next month, a delegation of Chinese officials arrived at Guantánamo to interrogate Abubakker and the other Uighur detainees. The night before the Chinese arrived, according to congressional testimony of the Justice Department's inspector general, the U.S. military used on the Uighurs "what became known as the 'frequent flyer program' to disrupt detainees' sleep in an effort to lessen their resistance to questioning." The next day, Abubakker told me with an air of indignation, "The Chinese prevented us from eating, drinking, and praying, and questioned some of us for nine hours. . . . They told me, 'If you don't speak now, you will speak in China.' They showed me that the Americans had given them my file—with my name, my home address, information about my family." At the end of the interrogation, when Abubakker refused to allow the Chinese officials to take his picture, "They went outside and brought in two Americans, who held my arms and neck while the Chinese photographed." Afterward, Abubakker said, he was sent on Chinese orders to solitary confinement in a frigid cell, from which he wasn't released until the Chinese delegation departed.

"When I saw that the Chinese had the power to punish us within Guantánamo," he told me, "I feared they would take us to China." As an FBI inquiry into detainee abuse would later reveal, this fear was far from fanciful: An employee who

COURTESY NATHAN THRALL; ANTHONY RUSSO

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was stationed in Guantánamo starting three months after the interrogation reported that "U.S. officials were considering whether to return the Uighurs to the Chinese, possibly to gain support for anticipated U.S. action in the Middle East. The Uighur detainees at Guantánamo were convinced that they would be immediately executed if they were returned to China." (Abubakker said that, at Guantánamo, he once asked his guards why they had broken their promise: "They told me that the materials had been handed over mistakenly by an official in Washington, D.C." Shaking his head, Abubakker told me with a sigh, "I am not a child to believe such things.")

Even today, the United States has not made total redress for the betrayal. In mid-July, the day before my first meeting with Abubakker, the Uighurs' interrogation was investigated by a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee, whose bipartisan members peppered J. Alan Liotta, principal director of the Pentagon's Office of Detainee Affairs, with a series of pointed questions: "Is this a defensible policy, to allow Chinese intelligence communist agents to interrogate people under our control, who we have recognized are no threat to the United States, without legal counsel, . . . and then to provide personal information with regard to their families?"; "[D]o you know what the disposition is of the families whose identities you revealed?"; "Do you know whether they have been executed or not?"; "Do you think we have any responsibility or culpability as to the welfare of those families?"; "[T]his is a defensible policy in the Department of Defense?" The Pentagon's representative replied, "That is the policy that exists today, yes, sir."

At the time of this writing, there are still more than a dozen innocent Uighurs at Guantánamo. For years, no country, including the United States, would offer them refuge. Albania, the first nation that did so—after about 100 others refused—faced Chinese demands to repatriate the Uighurs almost immediately after their arrival. But, when a Chinese delegation came to question Abubakker and other Uighurs at their refugee compound, Albanian officials turned them away. Since then, this poor Balkan country has provided the Uighurs with more than three years of financial assistance while the United States is not known to have offered anything.

And yet, despite his experience with the American government, Abubakker told me that he, like most Uighurs, has great admiration for the American people. As he said to his Combatant Status Review Tribunal, "We Uighurs have more than one billion enemies, that is enough for us."

Nathan Thrall

Nathan Thrall is a writer whose work has appeared in Commentary, GQ, and The New York Times, among other publications.

Choosing a President

On August 20, after casting her vote in Afghanistan's presidential election, the country's second ever, a woman in Herat clutches her identity card. Women reportedly registered to vote in higher numbers than men, but their turnout was low. This prompted concerns that men had falsely registered female family members in order to gather extra voting cards and cast fraudulent ballots.

RAHEB HOMAVANDI/REUTERS/LANDOV

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Hacking the Regime

How the Falun Gong empowered the Iranian uprising.

ELI LAKE

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad like to blame the uprising in Iran on outside influences. They particularly like to point their fingers at the British and the Americans, along with a requisite nod in the direction of the Zionists—a time-honored pretext for avoiding blame for discontent in their country. But, for all the phantom rabble-rousers, there's one outside influence that has actually helped shape events: the Falun Gong.

To most metropolitan Americans, the Falun Gong are the yellow-shirt-wearing adherents of a Chinese religious sect who hand out flyers on street corners. Those flyers describe the group's struggle against the Chinese government, which has banned the Falun Gong and subjected its members to organ-harvesting, electroshock therapy, and gulags. But, as the Chinese have escalated their efforts to stamp out the Falun Gong, the group has grown ever savvier in outwitting its oppressors. And it was the protestors in Iran who benefited from this savvy.

As the streets of Tehran erupted in the days following Mir Hossein Mousavi's bizarrely lopsided defeat, the regime's repressive apparatus kicked into full gear. Among its top priorities: shutting down access to the Internet. But, at this critical moment in the Islamic Republic's history, some of the government's Internet filters failed. Indeed, the most utopian proponents of the Internet's liberating powers seemed vindicated—as social-networking sites organized mass demonstrations and YouTube videos documented the brutal truncheons of the *basij* and the making of martyrs.

When these dissident Iranians chatted with each other and the outside world, they likely had no idea that many of their missives were being guided and guarded by 50 Falun Gong programmers spread out across the United States. These programmers, who almost all have day jobs, have created programs called Freegate and Ultrasurf that allow users to fake out Internet censors. Freegate disguises the browsing of its users, rerouting traffic using proxy servers. To prevent the Iranian authorities from cracking their system, the programmers must constantly switch the servers, a painstaking process.

The Falun Gong has proselytized its software with more fervor than its spiritual practices. It distributes its programs for free through an organization called the Global Internet Freedom Consortium (GIFC), sending a downloadable version of the software in millions of e-mails and instant messages. In July 2008, it introduced a Farsi version of its circumvention tool.

While it is hardly the only group to offer such devices, the Falun Gong's program is particularly popular thanks to its simplicity and relative speed. In fact, according to Shiyu Zhou, the deputy director of GIFC, the Farsi software was initially so popular that the group shut it down soon after introducing it. Iranians had simply swamped their servers, even outnumbering Freegate's Chinese users. (Iranian Internet restrictions are more lax than the Chinese, allowing much heavier outbound traffic than the GIFC is accustomed to handling.)

But, on the day after the presidential election this past June, the engineers reopened Freegate to Iranians, as a gesture of solidarity. And, once again, they were overwhelmed. "From then on, it got out of control," Zhou told me. Within 20 hours, the number of Freegate users doubled to an estimated one million. Zhou and his comrades were faced with a wrenching decision. They could continue helping the Iranians, which might flood and wipe out all of their operations. Or they could focus on trying to preserve lines of communication for their core users in China. "We had to restrict the traffic in Iran or else all of our servers would crash," Zhou said.

During the cold war, the dominant metaphor for describing the repression of totalitarian regimes was The Berlin Wall. To update that metaphor, we should talk about The Firewall. (The Great Firewall is what they call it in China.) There's a dream that the censors manning it will be overcome and the Internet will be used as a force of liberation—giving closed societies a tantalizing glimpse of the West, allowing repressed people to build social movements. And all that's a distinct possibility. But the Web is not nearly the implacable force for freedom that some of its champions have portrayed. The world's authoritarians have shown just as much aptitude for technology as their discontented citizens. Indeed, the race to beat the Internet censors is a central battle in the global struggle for democracy—a cat-and-mouse game where the fate of regimes could rest in no small measure on the work of the Falun Gong and others who write programs to circumvent Web censorship.

The Internet tactics of the Chinese and Iranian governments began innocently enough in American libraries. To meet federal preconditions for funding, libraries installed cyber-nanny software that blocked the ISP addresses of pornographic websites. This software developed by Silicon Valley companies like Macafee became widely available. And some repressive regimes like Iran simply repurposed it.

China, however, had a keener understanding of how technologically sophisticated youth might find their way around such filters and set out to create a more stalwart firewall. According to Chinese dissident Harry Wu, the state spent $800 million and enlisted the help of U.S. tech giants like Nortel and Cisco Systems to develop an initiative called the Golden Shield. This was a massive effort to harness technology to control and monitor the citizenry, leading to the creation of digital identification cards containing a microchip that stores a person's vital statistics (age, name, address, etc.) and a database that gives the state the capacity to recognize the voices and faces of its 1.3 billion people.

From the start, the Golden Shield was positioned to build an impenetrable firewall. That's because China's Internet traffic enters the country in fiber optic cables at only three locations. At these chokepoints, filters block many sites that have been flagged as unacceptable and scan unfamiliar sites for keywords (like "falun gong") that suggest subversiveness. Robert Guerra, the project director for Freedom House's Internet Free-

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dom Initiative, compared China's Internet infrastructure to a national highway system that is riddled with potholes and speed traps. "Even if you drove a Porsche on that highway, you would never be able to drive the car to its full capacity."

Success doesn't merely depend on technology. A large bureaucracy is deployed to fine-tune and enhance the filters—giving the Chinese the capacity to allow users to read *The New York Times* while denying them articles in the *Times* that the regime deems dangerous. And that full-time bureaucracy is supplemented by hundreds of thousands of nationalistic part-timers who are paid to post pro-government comments on blogs and to drown out dissenting voices in Web forums. These bloggers are called the Fifty Cent Army, indicating that Chinese Web labor is cheap.

The Golden Shield has become the envy of the authoritarian world. China has exported its technology to countries like Cuba and Belarus, according to Reporters Without Borders. And others, such as Iran, have studied their model. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard, for instance, has gotten into the game of Web censorship as part of a new initiative to counter what the regime dubs "soft revolution."

For all the success of the Golden Shield, there are still gaps that it can't fill. Censors have struggled to squash homegrown blogs, which can't be blocked at inbound chokepoints (although newfangled local Internet providers have censored these sites). The Falun Gong understands the gaps. It has probed for them and then rushed through them.

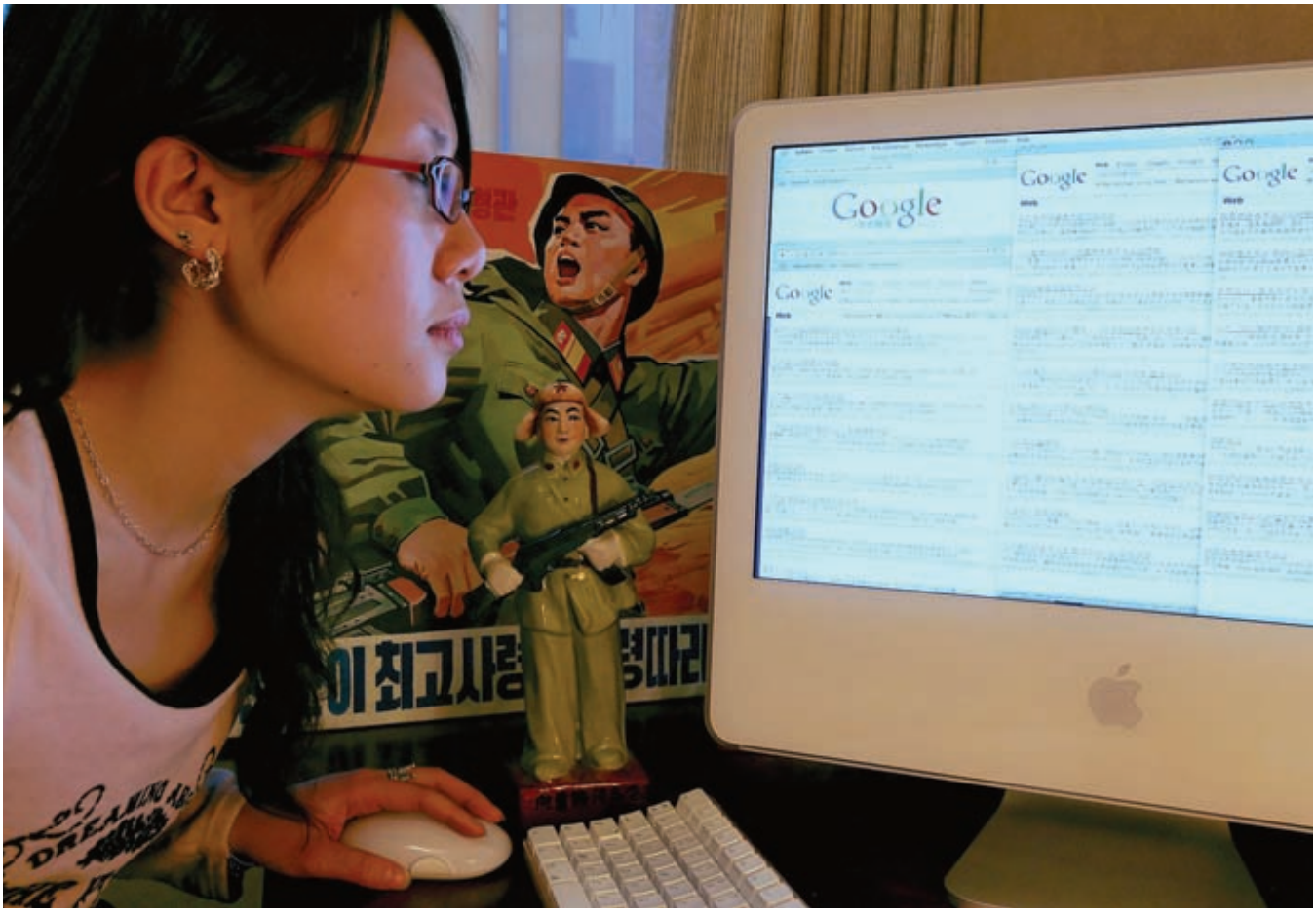
The Chinese assault on the Falun Gong has been ruthless. Since 1999, when the government outlawed the group, hundreds of its practitioners and most of the group's leading figures have been arrested and then abused. A January 2002 Human Rights Watch report on the crackdown said, "[S]erious human rights violations—including restrictions on freedom of thought, belief, and expression, wrongful detention, unfair trials, torture, and deaths in custody—have accompanied the Chinese government response to Falun Gong." Unlike many international human rights groups, whose sites will sporadically load, the Falun Gong pages have been comprehensively blocked.

For the Falun Gong, whose members are treated like terrorists, the Web is the only vehicle for connecting its underground to the world. Following the July 1999 crackdowns, the Internet also became the only venue for the group to counter the Chinese government's propaganda campaign against it.

The Falun Gong does not keep records of its membership in the United States or around the world. Nor does the group have a formal hierarchy. The closest thing the organization has to a leader is Li Hongzhi, whom practitioners call "teacher" and who currently resides in New York state. Falun Gong's practitioners happen to include a number of talented engineers employed by tech companies like Microsoft and Google, as well as by government agencies like NASA. And, in the face of the crackdown, and at the height of the dot-com bubble, the Falun Gong launched its own tech division, the GIFC.

For all their cleverness, members found themselves constantly outmaneuvered.

China has built a "Great Firewall" wherever fiber optic cable enters the country in order to block subversive Internet content.



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They would devise a strategy that would break past China's filtering tools, only to find their new sites quickly hacked or stymied. In 2002, though, they had their Freegate breakthrough. According to David Tian, a programmer with the GIFC and a research scientist at NASA, Freegate was unique because it not only disguised the ISP addresses, or Web destinations, but also cloaked the traffic signatures, or the ways in which the Chinese filters determined whether a Web user was sending an e-mail, navigating a website, sending an instant message, or using Skype. "In the beginning, Freegate was rudimentary, then the communists analyzed the software, they tried to figure out how we beat them. They started to block Freegate. But then, we started hiding the traffic signature," says Mr. Tian. "They have not been able to stop it since."

Even in the United States, this is risky work. In 2006, one of the GIFC's chief engineers, Peter Li , was attacked in his suburban home outside of Atlanta by three or four Asian men pretending to deliver water. He was bound and beaten, and two of his laptops were stolen. There's no way to prove this was not a random attack. But there was good reason to believe that the Falun Gong had managed to significantly irk its adversary.

This has led GIFC to keep their work under wraps. Their code is a tightly held secret, according to Shiyu Zhou. "The Chinese will constantly have people block you, reverse-engineer the tool, sabotage the tool," he says.

THE FALUN GONG was hardly alone in developing this kind of software. In fact, there's a Coke-Pepsi rivalry between Freegate and the other main program for skirting the censors: The Onion Router, or TOR. Although TOR was developed by the U.S. Navy—to protect Internet communication among its vessels—it has become a darling of the libertarian left. The TOR project was originally bankrolled, in part, by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the group that first sued the U.S. government for warrantless wiretapping. Many libertarians are drawn to TOR because they see it as a way for citizens to shield themselves from the prying eyes of government.

TOR uses an algorithm to route traffic randomly across three different proxy servers. This makes it slow but extremely secure—so secure that both the FBI and international criminal gangs have been known to use it. Unlike the Falun Gong, the TOR programmers have a fetish for making their code available to anyone.

There's an irony in the EFF's embrace of TOR, since the project also receives significant funding from the government. The Voice of America has contributed money so that its broadcasts can be heard via the Internet in countries that have blocked their site, a point of envy for the GIFC. For the past four years, the Falun Gong has also been urging the U.S. government to back Freegate financially, going so far as to enlist activists such as Michael Horowitz, a Reagan administration veteran, and Mark Palmer, a former ambassador to Hungary, to press Congress. (Neither was paid for his work.) But, when the two finally persuaded Congress to spend $15 million on anti-censorship software last year, the money was redirected to a program for training journalists. Both Palmer and Horowitz concluded that the State Department despised the idea of funding the Falun Gong.

That's a reasonable conclusion. The Chinese government views the Falun Gong almost the way the United States views Al Qaeda. As Richard Bush, a China expert at the Brookings Institution, puts it, "An effort to use U.S. government resources in support of a Falun Gong project would be read in the worst possible way by the Chinese government."

Still, there will no doubt be renewed pressure to direct money to the likes of the GIFC and TOR. In the wake of the Iran demonstrations, three bills to fund anti-censorship software are rocketing through Congress, with wide support. Tom Malinowski, the Washington director for Human Rights Watch, argues that such software "is to human rights work today what smuggling mimeograph machines was back in the 1970s, except it reaches millions more people."

The Falun Gong has proselytized its anti-censorship software with greater fervor than its spiritual practices.

IN THE BRIEF HISTORY of the Internet, there's been an assumption that the little guy (the blogger, Apple, Firefox) has an advantage over the slow-footed giants of the world. With Web circumvention tools, the little guys might ultimately prevail, too. When the Iranian regime deliberately slowed down the speed of its Internet and deployed its full resources to squash traffic, it made it very difficult to upload video to social networking sites—but those videos have still trickled through.

The authoritarian regimes of the world, however, understand their new vulnerabilities. Many aren't exactly known as technology leaders. Yet countries like Russia have pioneered cyber-warfare—and can devastate a website if they desire. A key component in Russia's battle plans against Georgia last summer was a swift denial-of-service attack on government computers in Tbilisi. Even North Korea has developed an offensive cyber-warfare capability, according to U.S. intelligence.

And, while the Falun Gong has managed to win the upper hand in its battle with the Chinese government, it has reason to be less sanguine about the future. The Chinese have returned to the cyber-nanny model that U.S. libraries have deployed. This notorious project is called the Green Dam, or, more precisely, the Green Dam Youth Escort. Under the Green Dam, every new Chinese computer is required to come with a stringent filter pre-installed and, therefore, nearly impossible to remove. As the filter collects data on users, it relies on a government database to block sites. If anything, the Green Dam is too comprehensive. In its initial run, the software gummed up computers, crashing browsers and prohibiting virtually every Web search. In August, Beijing announced that it would delay the project indefinitely. Still, China had revealed a model that could, in theory, defeat nearly every Web-circumvention tool.

When I asked David Tian, the GIFC programmer, about Green Dam, he spoke about it with a mix of pride and horror. The pride comes from the fact that the GIFC's successes have placed the Chinese on the defensive. "One of the reasons they started this Green Dam business and moved the filter to the computer is because they cannot stop our products with the current filters," he said. But he conceded that Green Dam will render Freegate useless.

In the world of product development—and freedom fighting—you innovate or die. The Falun Gong is determined not to go the way of the Commodore 64 into technological irrelevance. It has released a beta version of a new piece of software to overcome the Green Dam. Without a real chance to test it, it's hard to tell whether it will work. But it has overcome the first hurdle of product development. It has marketed its product with a name that captures the swagger of the enterprise. It is called Green Tsunami. ◆

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Murthaville

The city that pork built.

JASON ZENGERLE

One night last August, John Murtha, the U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania's Twelfth Congressional District, paid a visit to the LBK Game Ranch, a private hunting camp in the hills above his home city of Johnstown. About 60 people had gathered in the ranch's lodge—a luxury five-bedroom log cabin decorated with deer antlers and flat-screen televisions—to raise money for his 2008 campaign.

There were two odd things about the event. One was that the host was a former drug dealer. Bill Kuchera, a stocky man with a balding pate and a bristle-brush mustache, had run a bar near Johnstown in the mid-1970s, but, after a catastrophic flood in 1977—the third such flood to hit Johnstown since 1889—the bar had tanked along with the local economy. So Kuchera headed to Wisconsin, where he eked out a living hawking fireworks before moving into a more lucrative line of work: transporting marijuana from Miami for sale up north. He was busted in 1981 and served the better part of a year in federal prison.

No less strange was the political situation facing the guest of honor. Murtha was first elected to the House in 1974 and had long been one of the Democrats' most entrenched incumbents. On several occasions, the GOP had not even fielded a candidate to run against him. But ever since calling for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in November 2005—and, a few months later, alleging that Marines there had "killed innocent civilians in cold blood"—Murtha, a former Marine himself, had been the target of conservatives' ire. For his 2008 race, Republicans had not only fielded a candidate—a retired Army lieutenant colonel who moved from Virginia to Johnstown for the express purpose of unseating Murtha—but were in the process of showering him with more than $3 million in campaign contributions.

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

With his career on the line, Murtha had turned to Kuchera and other local supporters in Johnstown because, put simply, they owed him. Like Kuchera, Johnstown as a whole had experienced a remarkable reversal over the past two decades. And, in both cases, it was John Murtha who was largely responsible. For more than a century, beginning in the 1850s, steel had been king in the southwestern Pennsylvania city. "Along toward dusk tongues of flame would shoot up in the pall around Johnstown," Charlie Schwab, chairman of Bethlehem Steel from 1904 to 1939, once wrote. "When some furnace door was opened, the evening turned red." But it had been years since Johnstown's sky burned so bright. Bethlehem began shuttering its twelve miles of mills there in the late 1970s, closing the last one in 1992.

Unlike other Rust Belt cities, however, Johnstown was not completely decimated by the steel industry's collapse. From his perch on the House Appropriations Committee, Murtha had, over the years, directed $2 billion in federal spending to his district. Kuchera, who, following prison, had moved back to Johnstown and reinvented himself as an entrepreneur specializing in electronics and defense contracting, was just one of the local businessmen who had benefited from this largesse. "I'm certainly a Republican … and I don't think Mr. Murtha and I would agree on everything," Mark Pasquerilla, a Johnstown businessman who attended the fundraiser, later told me. But "on an economic-development level, he delivers." In steel's place, Murtha had become Johnstown's economic engine, keeping it afloat with a steady stream of government cash that flowed to the city's private businesses, its hospitals, even its airport—which, like so many things in Johnstown, now bore his name. Murtha was not just Johnstown's congressman; he was its savior.

That night in August, Murtha would raise as much as $100,000 for his reelection bid. And, in the weeks to come, others who owed their good fortunes to Murtha would direct portions of those fortunes toward his campaign. Ultimately, he matched his Republican challenger in the fund-raising contest. And, although polls taken just a few days before the election showed a neck-and-neck race, Murtha used his war chest to mount a last-minute ad blitz that propelled him to a 16-point victory. For the time being, it appeared that Bill Kuchera and the rest of Johnstown's business community had managed to save their savior, and themselves. "It's like we were sitting here with four aces and we weren't sure if we were going to bet it all or fold," Bill Polacek, the CEO of a local defense firm, told the Johnstown *Tribune-Democrat*. "With that kind of hand, why would you let the opportunity pass you by?"

But Johnstown's return to business as usual would prove short-lived. In late January, little more than a fortnight after Murtha was sworn in to his nineteenth term, federal agents raided the offices of Kuchera's two companies, as well as the LBK Game Ranch; they seized not just computers and boxes of records but Kuchera's seven rifles and one handgun, which, as a convicted felon, he was prohibited from owning. The raids, according to *The Washington Post*, were part of a federal investigation into allegations that Kuchera and his family had improperly used money from his company's Pentagon contracts

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for personal expenses, including renovations of his hunting ranch.

For much of the last year, federal law enforcement officials have been investigating not just Kuchera but a number of defense contractors and lobbyists with ties to Murtha; at the same time, the House ethics committee is said to be probing Murtha's and other lawmakers' relationships with a now-defunct lobbying firm that was helmed by a former congressional staffer who once worked with Murtha. As a result, Murtha's decades-long appropriations of phenomenal sums to his home district—and the campaign contributions he has received from some of the beneficiaries of those appropriations—are now at the center of one of Capitol Hill's biggest ongoing scandals. The controversies cut to the heart of what Polacek, who knows Murtha well, calls the congressman's "life's work—the continuation and survival of this community." Sitting in a conference room just a few hundred feet from an old Bethlehem Steel plant where his company now makes armored plating for military vehicles, Polacek framed the issue in stark terms. "If there weren't earmarks," he told me, "this town would be dead." Murtha, who declined through a spokesman to be interviewed for this story, has been similarly blunt. "If I'm corrupt," he recently said to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, "it's because I take care of my district."

Earmarks, of course, are perfectly legal, and most congressmen go out of their way to bring home money to their districts. "What Murtha is doing everybody else is doing," says Melanie Sloan, the executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. "It's just to such a higher degree that it becomes shocking." And, while Murtha's radical approach may well have saved Johnstown—a place that, due to natural or economic forces, always seems perched on the edge of extinction—it also created a city unduly dependent on one man: himself. If other congressional scandals in recent years have primarily revolved around individuals, from Jack Abramoff to "Duke" Cunningham to William Jefferson, the Murtha scandal involves the fate of an entire city.

Johnstown lies just 65 miles east of Pittsburgh, but both its geography and psychology have long conspired to isolate it from the larger world. Nestled in a deep valley at the confluence of the Little Conemaugh and Stonycreek rivers, Johnstown is surrounded on all sides by mountains, as if the city had been dropped from the sky and landed with such force that it punched a giant crater in the Alleghenies. In the 1950s, when federal highway officials were trying to place interstates by all 237 American cities with populations of 50,000 or more, Johnstown (population 65,232 at the time) was one of just seven cities to successfully resist those efforts, its civic and business leaders evidently believing that the thoroughfare would harm the local economy. Even when Johnstown has tried to break out of its isolation, the effort has been largely for naught: The John Murtha airport—the recipient of $200 million in federal spending over the past decade, most of it courtesy of its namesake—currently offers just three commercial flights a day, all bound for Washington's Dulles airport some 120 miles south. After I spent a few days in Johnstown last month, a reporter from the *Tribune-Democrat* got in touch with me in the hopes of writing a story about my stay; Johnstown, evidently, is not accustomed to many visitors.

Murtha's ancestors first came to the Johnstown area from Ireland in the 1840s to work in the coal industry. Born in 1932, he was just a boy when his father and three uncles all went off to fight in World War II. After three years in the Marine Corps and various postings throughout the South, Murtha settled with his wife, Joyce, back in Johnstown, where he ran his family's car wash and commanded a Marine Reserves company.

ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES, PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE/ZUMAPRESS.COM

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In 1966, the 33-year-old father of three volunteered for active duty and served a tour in Vietnam as a Marine intelligence officer. "Ever since I was a young boy, I had two goals in life," Murtha, a hulking figure with a six-foot-six-inch frame and gruff countenance, once confessed. "I wanted to be a colonel in the Marine Corps and a member of Congress." The first goal attained, Murtha set about achieving the second. When Johnstown's Republican congressman of two decades, John Saylor, died in office, Murtha ran for his seat in a special election in 1974. He won by 122 votes.

As the first Vietnam veteran elected to Congress, Murtha's hawkish views on military matters and foreign affairs carried unusual weight for a junior member. What made him even more atypical was the manner in which he conveyed those views. He eschewed floor speeches and the talk-show circuit in favor of closed-door negotiating sessions and overseas trips to visit Marines in Beirut or mujahedin in Afghanistan or other foreign hotspots seldom seen by what he called "Washington policy makers who never left their desks." From his seat in the back right-hand corner of the House chamber—which eventually came to be known as the "Murtha Corner"—he entertained a steady stream of Democrats and Republicans eager to benefit from his counsel and his ability to cut deals.

Although he didn't seek the spotlight, his influence was such that the spotlight inevitably shined on him. In 1985, *The Washington Post* deemed Murtha the House's "premier political operator." For his part, Murtha seemed to fancy himself the Metternich of the Rust Belt. His 2003 memoir *From Vietnam to 9/11: On the Front Lines of National Security* is a boastful recounting of his role in America's various foreign policy crises over the last four decades and a forceful summation of his own geostrategic views. "I believe the most important lesson of the twentieth century for America is that we can expect our national security to be challenged when our military is weak or when we are perceived as being irresolute," he wrote.

Saylor, Murtha's predecessor in the House, had carved out for himself a similar Washington wise-man role, albeit on environmental issues. Conservationists dubbed him "St. John," and his constituents used to joke, "Saylor cares more about the caribou in Colorado than he does about us." Nevertheless, the economy in Johnstown was sufficiently strong, due to the steel industry, that voters there kept sending Saylor back to Washington anyway. Murtha couldn't count on the same. As he was ascending to wise-man status in D.C., Johnstown was descending into economic chaos. The collapsing steel industry and the after-effects of the 1977 flood would drive Johnstown's unemployment rate up to 24 percent. And that figure failed to capture the full extent of Johnstown's economic woes, since many people, like Bill Kuchera, were abandoning the city altogether; by 1980, its population stood at 35,496, some 30,000 fewer people than had lived there just three decades earlier. Having a statesman for a congressman was no longer a luxury Johnstown could afford. "If [Murtha] wanted to stay in Washington," G. Terry Madonna, a professor at Franklin & Marshall College and a Pennsylvania political analyst, says, "he needed to start bringing home the bacon."

And thus began Murtha's schizophrenic existence: geostrategic thinker in Washington, grubby pork wrangler in Johnstown. His initial attempts to be the latter were sometimes comically inept. Together with Johnstown's business leaders, he became convinced that tourism could be the city's new industry. "The community was already looking toward 1989, which was going to be the centennial of the great flood," Bob Layo, the president of the Johnstown Chamber of Commerce, recalls. Alas, the $5 million Visitors Center that Murtha helped convince the National Park Service to build at the Johnstown Flood National Memorial failed to turn the city into a vacation destination.

Less amusing was Murtha's role in the Abscam scandal. In 1980, he was caught on government surveillance tape entertaining but ultimately rejecting a $50,000 bribe from an undercover FBI agent posing as a lawyer for an Arab sheik who needed help securing a visa. "After we've done some business, I might change my mind," Murtha told the agent, explaining that, by business, he meant investing in his district. "I think with a tie to the district, there's no problem getting [the sheik's immigration problem] taken care of. . . . I do business like this all the time to get companies into the area." Murtha wasn't charged in the case—and testified against two of the congressmen who were later convicted of accepting cash—but the scandal effectively ended his chances of ever joining the House leadership.

After much trial and error, in the mid-1980s, Murtha and Johnstown's civic and business leaders finally arrived at an effective economic rescue strategy: leveraging Murtha's position on the defense appropriations subcommittee to build a defense industry in Johnstown. For Murtha, it was a perfect solution—resolving the tension between foreign policy and local politics that had come to define his career. And it turned out to be a pretty good deal for Johnstown as well. "I remember being at some kind of party around 1983, and I met the head of economic development for the Pittsburgh region. And I said to him, 'What would you do if you were running economic development here?' " recalls Mark Pasquerilla, who was then working for his father Frank, a shopping mall and hotel magnate and the richest man in Johnstown. "And he said—I remember this quote—'I'll tell you one thing that I would do: I'd grab onto Murtha's coattails so tight, and I'd never let go.' "

One of the people who grabbed onto those coattails was Bill Kuchera. Following his stint in prison, he returned to Johnstown, where, along with his uncle and brother, he founded Kuchera Industries. The name was more impressive than the reality—an electronics repair shop that started with six employees and operated out of a garage—but, in 1993, he spun off a new company called Kuchera Defense Systems (KDS), and business began to boom. With Murtha's assistance, KDS landed a $2.4-million "mentor-protégé" contract to produce missile and communication systems components for Hughes Aircraft (which was later bought by the defense giant Raytheon). It was the first in a series of multimillion-dollar defense deals for KDS. By 2008, Kuchera's two companies employed about 300 people and boasted annual revenues of $50 million—much of it from congressional earmarks secured by Murtha.

The former drug runner was now a pillar of the Johnstown community. Kuchera served on nonprofit and hospital boards and sponsored the city's symphony. His home—located on his game ranch's 161 acres of white pine and oak trees—was close to the former site of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, the private resort where an earlier captain of industry, Andrew Carnegie, had been a member. And yet, despite this incredible metamorphosis, Kuchera never forgot the source of his good fortune. "Without Raytheon and without Congressman Murtha," he told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* in 2000, "there would be no Kuchera Defense."

Top: Murtha squats to inspect an MRAP armored vehicle. Bottom: An artillery piece outside of Johnstown's annual Showcase for Commerce.

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Now, it remains to be seen whether Kuchera Defense can survive. The January raid on his home and businesses was only the start of Kuchera's problems. In April, the Navy suspended its contracts with KDS because of "alleged fraud," including "multiple incidents" of incorrect charges. And, in July, a former executive with Coherent Systems International—which had partnered with KDS on a series of defense contracts worth more than $30 million—began cooperating with federal investigators and pled guilty to corruption charges, including taking $200,000 worth of kickbacks from a subcontractor identified in court documents only as "K" but whose similarities to KDS have been widely noted.

Kuchera (who, through an attorney, declined to be interviewed) has not been charged with any criminal wrongdoing. And, in August, the Navy lifted its suspension of KDS in exchange for tighter government oversight of the company's financial operations. But, for the time being, Kuchera appears to have lost his patron: While Murtha sponsored $14.7 million in earmarks for KDS in 2007 and 2008, he directed no new money to the company in the recently passed defense appropriations bill. And, when a reporter asked Murtha about the Kuchera investigation at a May press conference, the congressman erupted: "What's that got to do with me? What do you think? Do you think I oversee these companies? That's the Defense Department's job. That's not my job." Shortly thereafter, he ended the press conference and stormed out of the room.

Kuchera isn't the only source of uncomfortable questions for Murtha. Another is Paul Magliocchetti. Around the time Murtha and Johnstown were embarking on their quest to turn the city into a defense-industry hub back in the 1980s, Magliocchetti, who had worked with Murtha for ten years as a staffer on the defense appropriations subcommittee, was beginning his career as a lobbyist. The timing was fortuitous for everyone involved. Johnstown's businesses needed someone to handle the nuts and bolts of landing defense contracts, and Magliocchetti's lobbying firm, PMA, needed clients. "Paul knows how Congress works … and he knows how the appropriations process works," says Ed Sheehan, the CEO of Concurrent Technologies Corporation, which was one of roughly a dozen firms in the district to hire PMA. "What he did for the community up here was to basically explain to people what it was going to take to get into the defense industry." Sheehan says one of Magliocchetti's instructions couldn't have been simpler: "You need to follow this guy, meaning Jack Murtha, and don't ever embarrass him."

Concurrent, more than any other defense firm in Johnstown, owes its existence to Murtha. Founded in 1987 in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, the nonprofit company was originally called Metalworking Technology Inc.; its initial $27-million, five-year contract came from money Murtha had earmarked to the Navy for metalworking research. But, with the help of Murtha, Metalworking Technology soon expanded into other areas—from environmental technology to missile defense. In 1992, the company renamed itself Concurrent Technologies, and, two years later—its revenues having grown from $1.5 million to $60 million and its staff from 13 to nearly 450—ended its relationship with the University of Pittsburgh and became independent. The only things that didn't change were its nonprofit status and its reliance on Murtha, who continued to steer millions of dollars in defense earmarks its way. When I recently visited Concurrent's headquarters in the John P. Murtha Technology Center in Johnstown, Sheehan boasted, "We just finished our fiscal year, June 30, and we've done about two hundred and forty million in revenue." The company now has 20 offices across the country—many of them located in the congressional districts of other Appropriations Committee members—and employs 1,500 people. But the majority—about 800—work in Johnstown, making it the area's sixth-largest employer, right after Wal-Mart.

For more political coverage by Jason Zengerle and other TNR editors, check out ***THE PLANK*** *at www.tnr.com*

Sheehan, who worked for a defense contractor in northern Virginia before moving to Johnstown in 1989, was eager to tell me that, for the second year in a row, Concurrent had not received any earmarks from Murtha. "In the early years, obviously, the earmarks were there to help us build people and capability," he explained. "In the last four or five years, we've been moving away from earmark requests … so most of our work is nondirected, non-earmark." But that doesn't mean that Concurrent competes for all of its government contracts. As a nonprofit, it's eligible for sole-source contracts from the Pentagon. And giving business to Concurrent would seem an obvious way for the Defense Department to stay in Murtha's good graces. "They know who butters their bread," U.S. Representative Jeff Flake, an Arizona Republican and a leading critic of the appropriations process, told me. "They can't risk going against the appropriators."

Building a defense firm out of whole cloth is impressive, but Murtha's work on behalf of another Magliocchetti client, the Windber Medical Center, may be an even greater testament to the congressman's power—not to mention his creativity. Built in 1906 by a coal company to treat its miners, the Windber hospital, located just southeast of Johnstown, was in desperate shape by 1997, when Nick Jacobs took over as its CEO. "It was a one-hundred-and-two-bed hospital with Pepto Bismol pink walls, indoor-outdoor carpeting that was covered with duct-tape, and 'Brady Bunch' furniture," Jacobs says. "Ernst & Young came in and did an analysis of the future and said, 'It's over, you're going to have to close this thing down.'" One night, at a dinner party being thrown by one of his doctors, Jacobs happened to be seated next to Murtha, when the two began talking about heart disease—Jacobs, a heart patient himself, had been trying to institute Dean Ornish's cardiac treatment program at Windber—and Murtha had an idea. "He said, 'We're spending a billion dollars a year on heart disease in the military,'" Jacobs recalls. "He said, 'You know, if there's somebody at Walter Reed Army Hospital or Bethesda Naval Hospital that's interested in looking at this program, it might be something I could help you with.'" In 1998, Murtha inserted $2.5 million into the defense appropriations bill to fund Ornish programs for military personnel and their families at Walter Reed, Bethesda, and Windber. A year later, Murtha helped Windber secure a $7.5-million Defense Department grant to partner with Walter Reed on a breast-cancer research program; the new facility Windber built to house the program was named the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center.

The Pentagon money continued to flow into Windber, which Jacobs was then able to use as a lure for additional corporate and academic partners. By the time he stepped down as CEO last December, the Windber Medical Center had doubled in staff and outpatients since his taking over. And next to the original gray stone hospital built by the coal company stood a gleaming steel-and-glass research institute. Jacobs has no illusions about who built the latter. "Do you think that if Mr. Murtha wasn't in office that all this stuff would be here?" he asks. "I don't think it would."

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Indeed, it seems as if just about everything in Johnstown that isn't rust and brick bears Murtha's fingerprints—from the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra (which is underwritten by Boeing, General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman, among other defense contractors) to the Starbucks where Jacobs and I met (which, as Jacobs noted, was not the sort of business that existed in Johnstown before its defense boom). "There's more to do, there's more arts, there's better recreation," Mark Pasquerilla told me when we had breakfast in the restaurant of the hotel he owns in downtown Johnstown. "Everything is better than when I was a kid. It's more sophisticated." His restaurant, he added, had recently won a *Wine Spectator* award.

For years, Magliocchetti did his part to contribute to the Johnstown economy. Even as PMA grew into one of Washington's top lobbying shops, the company and its employees directed an inordinate amount of their civic energy toward Johnstown—sponsoring a champagne reception at the symphony's opera festival, for instance, or donating money to a local charity that funds educational programs. Magliocchetti himself, who is originally from Pittsburgh, became a familiar figure around Johnstown, especially in the spring when the economic development group Johnstown Area Regional Industries (a PMA client) co-sponsors the annual "Showcase for Commerce." A defense-industry trade fair held in Johnstown's cavernous hockey arena (where *Slap Shot* was filmed), the Showcase draws upward of 170 companies, some from as far away as Europe and California. Many of them attend to get face time with Murtha, who makes it a point of pride to visit every booth at every Showcase.

But this past May, as Murtha made his traditional rounds at the event, Magliocchetti was nowhere to be found. The previous November, federal agents had raided PMA's offices and Magliocchetti's home. According to *The New York Times*, they were investigating whether Magliocchetti had used straw donors to make campaign contributions to members of Congress. (The Center for Responsive Politics reports that Murtha received $2.4 million of the $40 million that PMA, its employees, and its clients donated.) In March, two months before the Showcase, PMA folded.

Murtha's office says it has not been contacted as part of the PMA probe. In May, federal authorities investigating PMA subpoenaed records from a Murtha ally, Indiana Representative Peter Visclosky. The House ethics committee is also looking into PMA's relationships with lawmakers, including, presumably, Murtha. And there is growing concern among Democrats on Capitol Hill about what all this poking around could turn up. Some observers believe PMA has the potential to be for the Democrats what the Abramoff scandal was for the GOP. Keith Ashdown, of the non-partisan watchdog group Taxpayers for Common Sense, told *The Hill* in February, "It will become the majority's Waterloo on ethics."

John Murtha is 77 years old and he has begun to show his age. Never a polished speaker, he has become even more gruff and gaffe-prone—in 2006, deriding as "total crap" an ethics and lobbying reform bill being pushed by Democratic leaders at the same time he was running (ultimately unsuccessfully) for majority leader; and last year, in the middle of his tough reelection campaign, calling western Pennsylvania a "racist area" before apologizing and later explaining that "this whole area, years ago, was really redneck." The scandals that now seem to swirl constantly around him have only made him appear more vulnerable, both legally and politically, with one reporter recently likening the Old Bull to a "wounded caribou." Two Republicans, including his 2008 opponent, are running for Murtha's seat in 2010, and he has even drawn a primary challenge. It seems possible, even likely, that Johnstown will lose Murtha as its congressman sometime in the next few years—due to electoral, judicial, or natural causes.

Yet, to hear Johnstown's business and civic leaders tell it, that day is far away. They express an absolute certainty that Murtha has not broken any laws, owing to his honesty and integrity. They note that his great-grandmother lived well into her nineties and that, while Murtha's father died young, it was because of alcoholism and Murtha himself does not drink. And they maintain that the scandals around Murtha have, in a way, strengthened him politically. "If anybody felt like Mr. Murtha … had a membership in the Washington country club, it looks to people around here like it's certainly been revoked," Pasquerilla says. "He looks like more of a man of the district than ever before."

And, when that long-off day arrives and Murtha does finally exit the stage—"He would like to die in the House," Pasquerilla told me—these men and women will be sad, but they will not be sad about Johnstown's future. "We've built a very diverse economy in this region," Ed Sheehan says. "We've got health care, we've got financial services, we have some manufacturing, we have some high-tech, applied R&D, we've got aerospace companies here, so we have a broad diversity." More than one person in Johnstown told me, "We are not a mill town anymore." But, of course, Johnstown's diverse economy all traces back to one congressman, much the way, 50 years ago, it all traced back to Bethlehem. Once, Bethlehem's mills in Johnstown produced steel to send to the world; now, Murtha's mill in Washington produces federal money to send to Johnstown.

There are a handful of people in Johnstown who seem to recognize the peril the city will face once Murtha is gone. "All major corporations have succession plans, and, if you want to think about this as a business model, if Jack is the CEO of the area, what is our succession plan here?" Donato Zucco, who served as the city's mayor in the 1990s and worked closely with Murtha during that period to rebuild the city, told me. "I don't think we have one, and I don't know that people are even thinking about it." When I asked Nick Jacobs what he thought the impact of Murtha's eventual departure would be, he paused for a moment, as if he were trying to calibrate what he was about to say, before replying: "I think it will be worse than the Johnstown Flood."

Of the city's three catastrophic floods, only the first is typically referred to as the Johnstown Flood. It occurred on May 31, 1889, when an earthen dam at the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club—not far from where, more than a century later, Bill Kuchera would build his LBK Game Ranch—burst after a heavy rainstorm, causing a wall of water to rush down from the mountains and into the city below. The flood killed more than 2,000 residents. For years after, people around the country marveled at how such an obvious danger—a giant mountaintop reservoir created by an earthen dam located just above a city—could have been tolerated. As David McCullough writes in *The Johnstown Flood*, it appeared "that Johnstown's leading citizens had taken little or no intelligent account of the threat the dam posed." But, as McCullough goes on to note, there were at least two Johnstown men who did. In November 1880, after one of them traveled up to the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club to inspect the dam, the men wrote to the club's president that the structure was in need of serious repair work. On December 2, the president responded, dismissing their concerns. "[Y]ou and your people are in no danger from our enterprise," he wrote. Eight years later came the deluge. ◆

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

ODD SURPRISES

One of the more thrilling chapters in film history is the account of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne. The joint career of these Belgian brothers has been, since they became known, breathtaking. After some twenty years of documentary work for Francophone television, in the early 1990s they began to make features. The first two were not widely seen. Then came *La Promesse* (1996), which was so much better than good, so complete and startling a work, that the occasion seemed less like the arrival of a fine new film than the discovery of a long-lost masterpiece.

That was only the beginning. In relatively short order came three more films, two of which had the same stunning, quasi-timeless effect. *Rosetta* is fiercely compassionate in temper and point. But *The Son* and *The Child*, like *La Promesse*, are more than compassionate: they are so magnificently simple and large that they tempt grand comparison. They seem, though they are not, adaptations of stories by Tolstoy.

Now comes a new Dardenne work, *Lorna's Silence*. Its very first shot is reassuring. We see bank notes being counted. Money, the pressing need of it, the results of that pressure, has initially driven all their pictures. But, after that opening, *Lorna's Silence* changes spheres somewhat. First, physically. The previous films took place in Seraing, a working-class town near Liège. The new film is set in Liège itself, a biggish city, and this is more than a geographical shift. The feel of the film, through its money dealings and what they lead to, is more intricately guileful.

For their drama, the Dardennes have seized on what is apparently a current scam. Belgian citizenship is a considerable prize in Europe these days, and it is available simply by marrying a Belgian. So marriages can be arranged at a price for anyone who wants to become Belgian. Lorna, a young woman from Albania, has become Belgian by marrying Claudy, which was arranged by a trickster named Fabio. Claudy is an advanced junkie who, as part of the deal, is expected to die soon. Fabio's plan will be complete when Lorna, now Belgian, is married to a Russian who is paying well for his new citizenship.

LORNA'S SILENCE
Sony Pictures Classics

MY FÜHRER: THE TRULY TRUEST TRUTH ABOUT ADOLF HITLER
First Run Features

Fabio drives a taxi, but that is just a cover for these marital maneuvers. Lorna is in love with a man named Sokol, but this will not interfere with the scheme. Sokol knows all about Lorna's doings and is just waiting for her to get her share of the Russian's money in order to start a café with her.

All these chicaneries are rapidly laid out. Though the directors now rarely use the whip pans—from face to face—for which they were noted, the tempo is almost audibly brisk. The Dardennes are consummate at lithe dialogue that contains needed information during which they keep their film surging forward. We seem to slip swiftly into a forest of shadows. Fabio deepens those shadows. After Claudy unexpectedly makes a sort of recovery from addiction, Fabio tells Lorna that the Russian is getting impatient and that, if (the unsuspecting) Claudy doesn't die as quickly as hoped, he will be overdosed so that Lorna can then be available to the Russian. Lorna knows that Claudy is doomed anyway, and she is eager for her and Sokol to get their share of the Russian money. She protests ineffectually. (Is this her silence?)

Yet soon after, in a fit of guilt and arousal after a violent fight with Claudy in their apartment, she has sex with him. Possibly out of some sort of compassion for this dupe, she seems to hope for pregnancy by him. Or perhaps she feels that, by bearing his child, she will expiate her guilt in the plot against him. After some weeks, she thinks she is pregnant, which leads to more complications, not to be detailed here. At the end, Lorna is left deluded, self-doomed, her own victim.

But—and it is a sort of compliment—this finish seems too small for a Dardenne film. Can the theme be only the very traversal of the plot's complications—the stripping away of greedy self-interest to reveal nullity? This has been the point of many a mere crime picture. Previous Dardenne films have tangled with the law and social acceptance, but those plots served as armatures for works of impressive moral size. In *Lorna's Silence* the armature is all. All that happens basically here is that the biter is bit. The expected Dardenne dimension, the shiver of cosmic pattern, is missing.

This thinness of texture is rubbed thinner by the character and performance of Lorna. In previous Dardenne films, the protagonist was thoroughly realized, and when he or she behaved badly or mistakenly, we worried. But as Lorna is written, we never know much about her—who she is, how she came to Liège and got involved. When Fabio says that he will have Claudy murdered if necessary, she soon accepts it. Who is the woman who does this? It is difficult to be concerned about

ANTHONY RUSSO

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her. She has been constructed as a piece in a design, not much more.

This sense of mechanism is abetted by the young Albanian actress Arta Dobroshi. Another actress might have infused Lorna, even as written, with colors, with some sense of the world's entrapment. Dobroshi is at best credible. The rest of the cast is just competent enough, except for Jérémie Renier as Claudy, who is strongly moving. (Renier, by the way, was the fourteen-year-old lead in *La Promesse*.)

Soberly, then, we must note that the new Dardenne film is not much more than a superior crime picture. From a lesser source, it would shine: it is very tightly and forcefully made. But by now we expect that every picture from the Dardennes will be something of a masterwork. They have spoiled us.

A German comedy called *My Führer: The Truly Truest Truth about Adolf Hitler*, despite its desperate subtitle, has some points of interest. Not all of those points were intended, but that makes them only more interesting.

Dani Levy, the writer-director, and Stefan Arndt, the producer, who have worked together before, decided (they say) that the best way to deal with Nazi insanity was to make it funny. Of course this has often been done before, but not in Germany. To push the plan to its uttermost, they apparently began with a gimmick: Hitler needs the help of a Jew. With that twist as their apex, they contrived a plot to reach it.

It is late 1944. Berlin is in ruins, morale is minimal, Hitler is depressive. Goebbels, the Machiavel of the story, has an idea. In his youth he saw a great Jewish actor, Adolf Grünbaum, who is now in Sachsenhausen. He sends for Grünbaum. (Can Levy have remembered that, in Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, written in 1941, an actor is summoned to inflate the persona of a crypto-Hitler? Admittedly, Brecht wasn't clever enough to make the actor a Jew.) Goebbels has the actor dressed and fed, then greets him cordially, asking him—he actually asks this—not to take the Final Solution personally. He says that the country needs the depressed Führer to be inspirited and that Grünbaum, master actor-director, is the man to do it. In a week or so, there will be a triumphal parade through Berlin—scenery will be erected in front of the ruins along the way—and Hitler must deliver a fiery speech. Goebbels says that Grünbaum must prepare the Führer for that speech. Grünbaum, stoic, strong, insists that in return his wife and children must be released from camps. They are all quickly brought to the Chancellery and stowed safely away. Grünbaum goes to work.

At first Hitler has him thrown out, but at last Grünbaum, his family in mind, goes to work on Hitler like a professional. He has to kindle hate again in the limp Hitler, to make him flame again with fury, and he finds the means in Hitler's relationship with his hated father. (An echo of *The Castle in the Forest*, Norman Mailer's last novel.) Goebbels, observing from the next room through a transparent painting on the wall, is pleased as Hitler begins again to fume.

The plot unwinds, not uncreakily. Past Brecht and Mailer, there is a salient comparison: Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940). Chaplin's screenplay, too, is built on the juxtaposition of a Jew, a barber, with the meister Jew-hater, though they never actually meet. And Chaplin's story, too, moves toward a great speech at the conclusion. Further, not to spill too much, in both films there is a sleight-of-voice trick at the end. And a further similarity: both Chaplin's and Levy's stories are unfinished. We never see what happens after the speech to Chaplin's barber and his girlfriend or to Grünbaum's family.

Levy's picture is adequately made. The Chancellery, designed by Christian Eisele, has the frozen-stadium feel of Nazi interiors. Levy gets some fun out of the *Heil Hitler* salute. (Himmler has an injured arm in a brace that is a permanent *Heil*.) Sylvester Groth as Goebbels has more diabolical charm than one can imagine in the man, but he is theatrically effective. Helge Schneider plays Hitler—a Hitler who seeks our sympathy toward his nightmares about his father's cruelties, which, we are told, resulted in Hitler's oceanic revenges on millions of others. Schneider writhes and screams his best in this thankless job. Ulrich Mühe, the eminent actor who was the Stasi officer in *The Lives of Others* and who plays Grünbaum here, died after the film was finished. His performance is part of his memorial. Grünbaum's composure and distinction are the tacit response to the ravings of the Führer.

In his later years Chaplin said: "Had I known of the actual horrors of the German concentration camps, I could not have made *The Great Dictator*. I could not have made fun of the homicidal insanity of the Nazis." Nor, at the time, could many of us have watched the film if we had known what we learned a few years after. But now there comes a burlesque on the subject—from Germany. (It has had some success, as well as opposition, at home.) Possibly, then, the chief importance of this tacked-together script is that it was actually filmed in that country. It exists—a sign that even Germany has reached the point where it is possible to laugh at ludicrous inventions about the monstrous past. Time does not heal all wounds; but some wounds can, in time, acquire several shades of irony. ◆

Richard Just
EVILS AND EXCUSES

SAVIORS AND SURVIVORS: DARFUR, POLITICS, AND THE WAR ON TERROR
By Mahmood Mamdani
(Pantheon, 398 pp., $26.95)

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: ENDING MASS ATROCITY CRIMES ONCE AND FOR ALL
By Gareth Evans
(Brookings, 349 pp., $24.95)

I.

In the summer of 2007, Mahmood Mamdani found himself at a meeting of activists and politicians, listening to sentiments that had by then become quite common among a certain class of politically active Americans. The speakers were calling on the United Nations to send peacekeepers to Darfur. Fed up with the inability of African Union troops—who were already on the ground in western Sudan—to stop the ongoing bloodshed, they insisted that U.N. forces could do better. The United Nations, explained one politician, echoing a view you could have heard on any number of college campuses at the time, would grant "mercy" to the people of Darfur.

Mamdani was appalled at what he was hearing. "The naïveté of these assumptions was breathtaking," he fumes in his new book, as he recalls the meeting. And it was not just this gathering that irked him. Other activists of his acquaintance were going even further. One friend was hoping that Americans would "impose a no-fly zone and ... hit selected targets." Meanwhile a "highly respected activist" had even raised the possibility of the United States sending its own ground

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troops to Sudan, or mustering troops from other countries for the humanitarian mission. Could Americans solve the problems of Darfur? an incredulous Mamdani asked. "Not really," the activist replied. "But what can we do? There is no other solution. We can't just do nothing."

What Mamdani was hearing was basically the position of most Save Darfur types from 2004 on, as it gradually dawned on the world that a genocide was taking place in western Sudan. Most favored sending United Nations troops to Darfur to replace an ineffective African Union force. Others thought that NATO or even American soldiers would be needed to stop the Sudanese government from murdering its own people and to establish the security that would allow millions of displaced Darfuris to begin returning home. Still others believed that the United States should take military measures short of an outright invasion of Darfur, such as establishing a no-fly zone. The particulars of these prescriptions varied, but what was common to all of them was a basic belief that the United States and its allies had a moral obligation to stop genocide and to relieve the suffering of the Darfuri people.

For Mamdani, all this was simply imperialism by another name. Now he has written a book outlining his demurral about Darfur, and attacking the movement in the West that argued for intervention in Sudan. Mamdani contends that Darfur was never a genocide. What took place in western Sudan beginning in 2003, according to him, was exaggerated and mangled by human rights activists in the West in order to gin up an excuse to invade Sudan.

Mamdani's book—which *The New York Times* called "learned" and "important"—is only ostensibly about Darfur. He has bigger and more ambitious themes. He wishes to show that Save Darfur activists—and, more broadly, "human rights fundamentalists," as he scornfully calls them—are the intellectual descendants of European colonialists, and also the ideological cousins of Dick Cheney. They have, he writes, issued "a clarion call for the recolonization of 'failed' states in Africa." For Mamdani, the Save Darfur movement is more or less indistinguishable from the great imperialist enterprise of our time, which is the war on terror. "The harsh truth," he argues, "is that the War on Terror has provided the coordinates, the language, the images, and the sentiment for interpreting Darfur."

Mamdani's book nicely exemplifies one pole in the old and ongoing struggle between two sometimes contradictory impulses of liberal foreign policy: the opposition to imperialism and the devotion to human rights. If liberals view anti-imperialism as their primary philosophical commitment, then they will be reluctant to meddle in the affairs of other countries, even when they are ruled by authoritarian governments—as in Sudan—that abuse their own people. But if liberalism's primary commitment is to human rights, then liberals will be willing to judge, to oppose, and even to undermine such governments.

The differences between these two strains in left-wing thinking are stark, but they are not always obvious. That is because history has often conspired to paper them over—particularly during the Cold War, when the United States backed a number of awful dictators. Criticizing American support for Pinochet or Mobutu was consistent with both anti-imperialism and a healthy interest in human rights. Such situations temporarily exempted liberals from the trouble of disaggregating their philosophical commitments and establishing how well, or not well, they went together. But history does not always present such convenient circumstances; and since the end of the Cold War, every time the United States has undertaken a humanitarian intervention—or, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, interventions with humanitarian implications—this fundamental split has, in one form or another, returned to the center of the liberal debate.

While this question tends to come to the fore most dramatically in arguments over war, it is not fundamentally a question about war. The military is simply one among many means that can be used to interfere in other countries (though it is certainly the bluntest). The more basic question—is it *right* to interfere?—is the one that needs to be asked before we talk about invasions or air strikes or sanctions or International Criminal Court indictments or any other means of impeding abusive leaders and promoting human rights. And when you put the question to people on the left—when you ask them whether it is morally and historically correct for liberals to be in the business of promoting liberalism by undermining illiberal governments—you get a wide range of responses, which suggest that the old contest between the anti-imperialist impulse and the human rights impulse is alive and well.

If Mamdani's book demarcates the anti-imperialist pole of this debate, another recent book speaks for the opposite side. It is called *The Responsibility to Protect*, which is also the name of a new international doctrine formulated by liberals who fall squarely in the human rights camp. Back in 2000, the Canadian government assembled a group called the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty to take up the question of how governments should respond to genocide and other mass crimes. Out of this group's deliberations emerged the concept of "the responsibility to protect"—or R2P, as it has come to be known in the policy community. The commission's co-chair was a former Australian diplomat named Gareth Evans, who, until recently, headed the International Crisis Group. Evans has written a book attempting to explain the doctrine, and to defend it.

The term "humanitarian intervention"—which, Evans takes pains to note, is only military in nature and therefore does not capture the full meaning of "the responsibility to protect"—has been in circulation since at least the nineteenth century; but during the 1990s, as the Cold War drew to a close and national interests briefly faded to the background of foreign policy, the question of when and whether interventions could be justified on purely moral grounds moved for the first time to the center of the international discussion. Out of the debates surrounding Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo came a number of similar ideas about how the international community ought to conduct itself in humanitarian emergencies. Evans credits Bernard Kouchner with helping to start the discussion by proposing, in the 1980s, a "right to intervene"—a phrase that earned widespread usage when the United States entered Somalia in 1992. It soon became clear, Evans writes, that other actors—from the U.N. Development Program, which in 1994 proposed the concept of "human security," to the Sudanese scholar Francis Deng, who in 1996 co-wrote a book titled *Sovereignty as Responsibility*, to Tony Blair, who in 1999 defended Kosovo as "a just war, based not on any territorial ambition but on values," to Kofi Annan, who coined the term "individual sovereignty"—were thinking along similar lines. The aim behind all these ideas was more or less the same: to complicate the traditional notion of state sovereignty by codifying the principle that governments

ANTHONY RUSSO

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could not be permitted to commit mass crimes against their own people.

But these efforts often ran afoul of politicians in the developing world, who thought that they sounded too much like imperialism. Evans's commission—which included Michael Ignatieff, Lee Hamilton, and several developing-world politicians, such as former Filipino president Fidel Ramos and Cyril Ramaphosa of the African National Congress—wanted to find a way around this problem. Its answer was the phrase "the responsibility to protect," which identified three obligations of the international community in the event of mass crimes: "the responsibility to prevent," "the responsibility to react," and "the responsibility to rebuild." The commission emphasized that prevention was "the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect." In other words, this new doctrine was not chiefly about barreling into a country with troops to save a vulnerable population. It was more about using soft power to prevent awful situations from developing in the first place. (Military force could be used, but only as a last resort.) Four years after Evans and his commission issued their report, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution endorsing the responsibility to protect.

R2P may sound like a banal idea, but in fact it is quite radical. The belief that governments have a moral responsibility to protect people in other countries who are potential victims of crimes against humanity, and that human rights in such extreme circumstances supersede state sovereignty, has not exactly been the norm throughout human history. Reasonable people can certainly disagree about the proper means for implementing this concept, haggling over when to apply it and how; but the idea itself is a genuine innovation in international politics, and—for liberals who wish to emphasize human rights over anti-imperialism—a welcome one.

Here is the tragic part. Having adopted this new doctrine in 2005, the nations of the world proceeded to sit by and watch Darfur burn—suggesting that R2P, whatever its power in theory, would not change the way the big powers behaved overnight. But if world leaders were slow to pick up on the practical requirements of the idea that they had just endorsed, another group of actors was not: the Darfur activists. Indeed, the speed with which the concept of R2P entered the popular discourse, eventually becoming the intellectual backbone of the Save Darfur movement, may help to explain why Mamdani wrote *Saviors and Survivors*. He seems to have taken stock of the liberal activists mobilizing around Darfur and concluded that those who advocate the motive of anti-imperialism against the motive of human rights were losing the battle for the future of the left. If this is the case, it is remarkable, because Iraq should have stacked the deck in Mamdani's favor. Here was a costly war that largely failed to deliver the humanitarian benefits that its supporters had promised, while lending ammunition to the idea that America was a greedy imperialist power bent on occupying foreign lands. And yet many Americans—including plenty who opposed the war against Saddam—have seemed more galvanized in recent years by calls to interfere in Darfur than by calls to stop interfering in Iraq. Mamdani notes this, and makes clear that it drives him nuts.

Now a liberal occupies the White House, and so this battle of ideas acquires a new urgency. Taken side by side, these two books broach all the necessary questions. Which of these visions is more sober? Which is more logical? Which is more compassionate? And does one vision come closer than the other to capturing the essence of what it means to be a liberal?

II.

The problems with Mamdani's book start on the very first page, where he describes genocide incorrectly as "killing with intent to eliminate an entire group." The Genocide Convention, adopted in 1948, defines genocide as an attempt to eliminate a group "in whole or in part." This is an important distinction. Did the Sudanese government and its Arab militia allies try to eliminate every last member of every Darfuri ethnic group that was linked to the rebels? Of course not. But there is abundant evidence that they did try to eliminate significant percentages of these groups—directly, by massacring vast numbers of civilians; and indirectly, by chasing millions off their land and forcing them into camps, where many slowly died from disease and malnutrition.

The malicious intent behind these various strategies was not kept secret. In 2003, according to Human Rights Watch, the Sudanese government's interior minister delivered a speech in Darfur to Janjaweed and soldiers. "He asked them to kill the Fur because the Fur had joined the rebellion," one witness recounted. Another government official declared shortly thereafter: "Zaghawa, Fur, and Masalit have become rebels. We will burn

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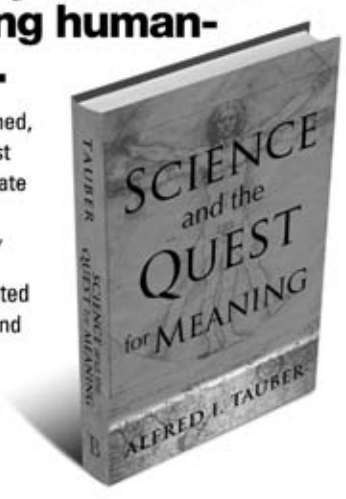

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everything down and only leave behind the trees." And, in 2004, the Janjaweed leader Musa Hilal issued his infamous order: "Change the demography of Darfur and empty it of African tribes." None of these quotations appear in *Saviors and Survivors*.

Mamdani's opening misstep in defining genocide sets the tone for how he will proceed. A glaring error here or there; a stubborn refusal to admit nuances and caveats, or to engage facts that are inconvenient to his argument; a chilling inability to weigh the real human costs of the policies he is advocating; and, most disturbingly for someone who has made his career as an academic, a bizarre ineptitude with logic—by which I mean that Mamdani's central arguments do not finally prove what he seems to think they prove.

Following his errant definition of genocide, Mamdani's next major conceptual error is his mischaracterization of the Save Darfur movement. He lumps Save Darfur activists together with the neoconservatives of the Bush administration: "One needs to keep in mind the central political thrust of the Save Darfur movement.... Its raison d'être is to be sought in the War on Terror." He seems oblivious to the highly inconvenient fact that the roots of Save Darfur were very much on the left. At the movement's signature event—a rally in Washington in 2006 that drew thousands—the speakers included Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi, and that infamous neoconservative Al Sharpton. Mamdani does not even attempt to explain why, if Save Darfur's message and prescriptions were so consistent with the Bush administration's ideological outlook, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and company didn't just invade Sudan. After all, they kindled to the use of American force.

In reality, instead of viewing themselves as allies of Bush, the Save Darfur activists by and large came to despise the administration for dragging its feet on the issue. What's more, Mamdani never explains how Western intervention in Darfur could have plausibly provided any benefit in the war on terror. Had he bothered to think through the logic of his assertion, he would have realized that he had things exactly backward. Far from drawing the United States closer to an intervention in Darfur, the war on terror was likely one of the prime brakes upon American action against the genocide. By 2003, when it unleashed its destruction on Darfur, the Sudanese government was cooperating closely with Washington by providing intelligence on Al Qaeda. One of the reasons the administration may have hesitated to put more pressure on Khartoum to stop the killing was because it feared cutting off this intelligence pipeline.

Mamdani's argument again and again founders on the question of America's self-interest. He wants readers to believe that the notion of Darfur as a genocide was somehow cooked up to serve American strategic purposes, but he cannot provide a compelling explanation for what exactly those purposes were. Genocide, he instructs, has been "instrumentalized by big powers so as to target those newly independent states that they find unruly and want to discipline." But why would the United States want to discipline Khartoum, which by 2003 was aiding the war on terror and was—finally, after years of intransigence—cooperating with the effort to bring peace to the southern part of the country?

At one point, seemingly out of a weary sense of obligation, Mamdani trots out the left-wing conspiracy theorist's favorite key to all imperialist adventures: oil. Reprimanding Mia Farrow and Steven Spielberg for their Darfur activism surrounding the 2008 Olympics, he writes that they "seemed blissfully ignorant of the fact that part of the dynamics driving the contention between the United States and China in the region was that both were knee-deep in oil, the United States on the Chad side of the border and China on the Sudan side." But having made a vague link to oil, he makes no effort to explain why picking a fight with Sudan would have benefited American oil interests. If it was Sudan's oil that we were after, wouldn't the simplest approach have been to normalize relations with Khartoum and let American companies do business with the regime? The cold fact is that the Darfur genocide was at cross-purposes with our strategic interests, which was why realists generally opposed doing anything about it. It would have been much better for American interests—for terror warriors and oil companies alike—if the Darfur genocide had never taken place. But alas, it did.

The point goes beyond Darfur. In trying to sell an idealistic foreign policy to Americans, presidents have often argued that our values and our interests are identical. But this is rarely, if ever, the case. Over the long term, Americans would probably benefit from the emergence of a freer world; but in the short term, promoting human rights and countering authoritarianism is often quite antithetical to our national interest—in Sudan, in China, and in Saudi Arabia, just to take three obvious examples. But the conflation of American values and interests is not just false; it is also damaging, because it gives fuel to those like Mamdani who want to see interests lurking behind every assertion of values. In their imagination, "human rights fundamentalists" are always a stalking horse for oil or anti-terrorism. This is how they conclude that human rights groups are indistinguishable from imperialists. I understand the temptation to conflate human rights with American self-interest—it is a strong arrow in the quiver of those who argue for American action against genocide—but "idealists" should understand that when we do this, we are only making the work of anti-American paranoids such as Mamdani much easier.

Mamdani's most consistent refrain is the word "context," which becomes something of a fetish for him as the book wears on. He repeatedly accuses activists and journalists of failing to see the Darfur killing in context. "If 'good Germans' were taught to trust their leaders first and ask questions later, the good souls mobilized to save Darfur are taught to trust pictures above all else and ask questions later," he observes. "Above all, they strip Darfur—and the violence in Darfur—of context." And later: "It is the purpose of part two of the book to restore the historical and contemporary context of Darfur." (Context works all sorts of miracles for Mamdani: not long ago, in the *London Review of Books*, he published a quasi-defense of Robert Mugabe titled "Lessons of Zimbabwe: Mugabe in Context.") So let us take Mamdani seriously and see what the context that he provides actually proves.

Much of *Saviors and Survivors* is devoted to the history of Darfur and Sudan. Mamdani uses this history to make several arguments. One is that the Arab tribes of Darfur were not settlers in the region—that is, they were no less indigenous to the region than African tribes. Mamdani somehow persuaded himself that this view of Arabs as settlers and Africans as natives was one of the intellectual cornerstones of the Save Darfur worldview. "The Save Darfur movement and the intelligentsia that has gravitated around it assumes that Arabs are settlers in Sudan," he asserts. He cites, by my count, just two examples to support this: one book and a statement from Brian Steidle, a former Marine who, while working for the African Union, became an early witness to the genocide.

I have been studying Darfur for years and not once prior to reading this book have I heard or read an activist base his

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desire to end the genocide on the supposition that the Arab tribes of Darfur were settlers. But even if we accept that this misunderstanding is in fact widespread, I fail to see how correcting it advances Mamdani's argument that Darfur was not really a genocide. The settlement patterns of previous centuries do not have any bearing on the empirical question of whether, in 2003, local Arab militias, egged on by an Arab supremacist government in Khartoum, set out to murder members of tribes different from their own. And Mamdani makes no attempt to explain why these two issues would have anything to do with each other. He simply harrumphs, "It is assumed that Arab tribes of Sudan originate from Arab settlers who came from the Middle East, but in fact the Arabs of Sudan are as native to Sudan as most of its inhabitants," and then proceeds to devote large swaths of his text to proving this assertion. The result is a perfectly interesting piece of historical knowledge, but one that tells us nothing about whether or not a genocide has taken place. If Mamdani's opponents make points devoid of context, he delivers context devoid of a point.

He does something analogous when it comes to more recent history. Darfur activists have often noted the similarities between Khartoum's scorched-earth campaign in southern Sudan and its tactics in Darfur. The history of southern Sudan is useful to understanding Darfur because it tells us something about the nature of the regime we are dealing with. If Khartoum had not just finished murdering hundreds of thousands of its own people in southern Sudan, its insistence back in 2004 that what was taking place in Darfur was really just a tribal conflict—and not a campaign of violence unleashed by the government itself—might have been a bit more believable. But Mamdani rejects the comparison between southern Sudan and Darfur, calling it "extremely misleading" and reprimanding Save Darfur types for failing to grasp the distinctions. He produces a number of dissimilarities between the two conflicts, such as the commonly known fact that many Darfuris, including the future leader of a Darfuri rebel group called the Justice and Equality Movement, were allied with the North during the North-South war. "In a historical sense, JEM—and not the Janjawiid—was a child of those who led and participated in the counterinsurgency in southern Sudan and who were subsequently disappointed by their marginalization in the Islamist alliance in Khartoum," he announces, with satisfaction.

What he never explains is why such bits of context matter at all to our understanding of Darfur. The fact that there were differences between the two conflicts—of course there were: are any conflicts identical?—does not disprove the existence of one very relevant similarity. It is that, in both cases, the same ruthless regime, run by the same man, used extreme violence to counter rebellions and hold together an unwieldy country. That some of those complicit in the first crime broke with the government before the start of the second crime is, again, an interesting historical fact. But I have no idea why Mamdani thinks it advances the overall argument of his book.

Sometimes Mamdani's precious context is not irrelevant to his argument, but actually undermines what he is trying to prove. He is convinced, for example, that one of the problems with our understanding of Darfur is that we are too quick to see the Arabs of Darfur as identical to the Arabs of Khartoum, when in fact they are quite different. "It is … assumed that Arab tribes in Darfur and in riverine Sudan [Khartoum and its environs] are products of a single history of 'Arabs' and 'Arabization,' when they are not," he admonishes. In the course of disproving this, he shows that Darfur and riverine Sudan were for most of history distinct entities with very different social systems, not natural parts of the same country. "If not for the Mahdiyya," he writes, referring to the anticolonial movement that briefly ruled Sudan in the late nineteenth century, "we would speak of western Sudan and the Nile as two separate political entities, much the same way as we do of north and south Sudan." Mamdani has a point: with the exception of a few decades at the end of the 1800s, Darfur was independent from the rest of Sudan for all of its history, until the British welded it to Khartoum in 1916. This information may vindicate Mamdani's position that the Arabs who run the central government in Khartoum and the Arab tribes of Darfur are not one and the same. But he seems blind to where this logic leads.

There are essentially two ways to view the conflict in Darfur: as a civil war among the region's tribes, or as a conflict between the center of Sudan and the periphery, in which the center (that is, Khartoum) used local Arab militias to defeat a rebellion that it feared would lead to independence for the periphery. There is clearly a grain of truth to both explanations. But just about everyone who follows Darfur—from the ICC, which has held Sudan's president responsible for orchestrating the violence, to Darfuris themselves, who have repeatedly told interviewers that they mainly blame the central government for the violence—seems to agree that, at its core, this was a conflict pitting Khartoum against Darfur more than it was a conflict pitting Darfuris against each other. And the history that Mamdani is relating—of two distinct entities that were probably never meant to be part of the same nation-state—reinforces this interpretation. After all, if you have a center with only a tenuous historical grasp over a periphery, it becomes quite clear why that center would need to resort to mass violence to maintain its grip.

What follows from all this is that there is one key to solving the Darfur crisis: changing Khartoum's behavior. If Darfur were just an internal tribal civil war, there would have been little that outsiders could have done to stop the violence. But as we learned in the Balkans, if there exists a government that can be held responsible for orchestrating genocide—as opposed to just a random and confusing collection of ethnic groups—then it is often quite possible to stop the killing through diplomacy, threats, and punitive military force against that government.

Another bit of context that Mamdani is eager to trumpet is the oppression that the Arabs of Darfur have often suffered at the hands of African tribes. He points out that while Arabs have long constituted the ruling class in riverine Sudan, "the opposite was the case in Darfur," where many Arab tribes have been denied land rights and generally treated like second-class citizens. "If Darfur was marginal in Sudan, the Arabs of Darfur were marginal in Darfur," he writes. "In other words, the Arabs of Darfur were doubly marginalized." None of this is untrue. But what does it prove? It certainly does nothing to diminish the horror of what was done to the African tribes of Darfur beginning in 2003. History is replete with examples of formerly oppressed groups committing terrible acts. Mamdani should be familiar with this phenomenon, since he wrote a book about the Rwandan genocide called *When Victims Become Killers*.

Mamdani never comes out and says that his evidence of historical Arab suffering is somehow exculpatory on the question of genocide. But what are we to make of sentences such as this one? "In the Sultanate of Dar Fur … it is Fur that developed as the identity of power and Arab that became a marginal and

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insurgent identity." Situated as this evidence is in the middle of a book dedicated to arguing that the Darfur genocide was not really as bad as we think, the implication seems quite clear. This is a breathtakingly offensive insinuation. History rarely presents clear through-lines of group morality. People who suffer during one era are perfectly capable of inflicting suffering during another era, and the existence of prior suffering is not a defense against contemporary human rights abuses of any kind, much less genocide. This is "context" at its ugliest.

Of course Mamdani is happy to ignore context when it suits him. A key theme in his book is that the Iraq war was worse than the Darfur genocide:

> The year 2003 saw the unfolding of two very different armed conflicts. One was in Iraq, and it grew out of war and invasion. The other was in Darfur, Sudan, and it grew as a response to an internal insurgency. The former involved a liberation war against a foreign occupation, the latter a civil war in an independent state.... We have the astonishing spectacle of the United States, which has authored the violence in Iraq, branding an adversary state, Sudan, which has authored the violence in Darfur, as the perpetrator of genocide.... And yet, as we have already seen, the figures for the total number of excess dead are far higher for Iraq than for Darfur.

I think it unlikely that more civilians have died in Iraq than in Darfur, but credible estimates vary wildly in both conflicts, and it is certainly possible that there have been more deaths in Iraq. Mamdani has a long analysis of death statistics from Darfur aiming to show that far fewer people have died there than we think. I have no idea whether he is right, but however you calculate mortality in Darfur, the number of deaths there has been considerable. Most observers believe it was in the hundreds of thousands.

Whatever the true statistics, the number of civilian deaths in Iraq has been appalling. And yet surely a context artist such as Mamdani should be willing to see that the varying circumstances of the deaths in Iraq and Darfur matter a great deal. The people killed in Darfur were civilians deliberately targeted for massacre, rape, and expulsion by the government. The destruction in Iraq after 2003 was caused not by American soldiers but by extremists who were seeking either (in the case of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia) to establish an Islamist theocracy in Iraq or (in the case of Iraqi militias) to kill as many Sunnis or Shia as possible. These people killed many American soldiers, but mostly they just killed Iraqis. And the primary mission of American soldiers was to protect Iraqis against these killers. It is true that our military did not always carry out this mission well, and horrors such as Abu Ghraib underscore that America is capable of cruelty of its own. Yet the fundamental reason we stayed in Iraq after 2003 was to stop Iraqis from being murdered, and to increase the odds that Iraqi democracy would survive. Is Mamdani really incapable of seeing no difference between an effort, however deeply flawed, to give Iraqis control over their own destiny, and a bid by an authoritarian government to hold together its country through a deliberate policy of extermination, rape, and displacement?

Mamdani also thinks nothing of twisting history to deliver the context he wants. Many historians have noted the destructive role that Muammar Qaddafi played in Darfur over the years—using the territory as a base from which to attempt to overthrow the Chadian government, flooding the region with weapons, and backing the creation of a Darfuri group called the Arab Gathering that helped to lay the groundwork for genocide by heightening the atmosphere of racialism in western Sudan. But Mamdani, while acknowledging Qaddafi's role, wishes to pin much of the blame for the genocide on a different leader: Ronald Reagan. "Two individuals," he writes, "more than any others, played a key role in stoking local into regional conflicts.... Although Qaddafi was the first to appear on the scene, Reagan would loom larger." Mamdani's retelling of Chad's history is designed to assign more of the blame to Reagan for the country's instability—and hence for the problems that leaked into Darfur.

But his historical account brazenly inverts causality. As J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins demonstrate in their book *Darfur: The Long Road to Disaster*, Qaddafi began supporting efforts to overthrow the Chadian government within months of taking power in 1969, and he finally (though briefly) conquered Chad in late 1980. All of this happened before Reagan became president. Mamdani writes that in the 1980s "the Libyans learned from the United States and shifted from a direct confrontation to a proxy war." A few pages later, he says it again for good measure: "The Reagan administration embraced proxy wars with missionary zeal following the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. Once again, the lesson was eagerly emulated by governments in the region." This is absurd. It is true that Reagan backed a brutal man named Hissene Habre in his bid to evict the Libyans from Chad, but Qaddafi had been backing proxy forces in Chad since 1969. He hardly needed the United States to teach him how to do it. (This tendency to deny agency to Africans is something that David Rieff noticed in his review of Mamdani's book on Rwanda in these pages in 2001.)

Qaddafi's behavior in Chad was, in sum, both destructive and imperialist from the moment that he seized power. The idea that he was not responsible for his own actions—that he "learned" them from Reagan—is flatly ahistorical. And like so much else Mamdani writes, it has no logical bearing on the question of whether genocide took place in Darfur, and what the United States ought to have done about it.

Perhaps Mamdani's most annoying rhetorical tic is his repeated condescension toward the world of journalism. "Africa is usually the entry point for a novice reporter on the international desk, a learning laboratory where he or she is expected to gain experience," he writes, more or less implying that journalists are too young or too stupid to understand the stories they are covering. Later he accuses journalists such as Philip Gourevitch of having sketched a "pornography of violence" in their coverage of Africa, and of reducing "a complex political context to a morality tale unfolding in a world populated by villains and victims who never trade places and so can always and easily be told apart." There is something reality-averse about Mamdani's attack on journalism that reminds me of the way right-wingers used to carp about mainstream media coverage of Iraq during the dark, violence-filled days of 2006. Where in our media is the good news from Iraq? conservatives would howl. But the news from Iraq was bad not because the press turned away from good news, but because for a long time people were dying there in large numbers. The same goes for Darfur, especially during the early days of the genocide. When Reuters reports that a village has been attacked and dozens of people are dead, is that the "pornography of violence"? Or is it simply an empirical account of what just happened in Darfur?

So is there any value at all to *Saviors and Survivors*? Yes, there is. Even the most accurate narratives have analytical weaknesses, and our pre-

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vailing narrative of Darfur is no exception. Mamdani's attack on the dominant Darfur narrative is broadly wrong, but some of his complaints are worth taking seriously. Writers (including myself) have not always emphasized that the majority of the killing in Darfur took place during the first few years of the crisis. Mamdani is right, in retrospect, that there was a lag between what was happening on the ground and how activists and journalists in America responded. By 2006, when the Save Darfur movement began to gain some momentum, the bulk of the destruction was largely complete.

At the same time, however, the notion that the genocide ended in 2005 is not quite correct either. On plenty of occasions in 2006, 2007, and 2008 there were reports of devastating attacks against civilians by Janjaweed and government forces. Given what transpired in Darfur from 2003 to 2005, I do not think it was illegitimate to view these later attacks as the continuation of a genocidal policy, albeit one carried out at a somewhat lower intensity than before. It is also important to remember that nearly three million Darfuris remain in camps. The Sudanese government shows no interest in helping these people return home, and it feels no compunction about obstructing the work of the NGOs that are keeping them alive, most recently by expelling numerous aid groups in retaliation for the ICC's indictment of President Omar Bashir. To have forced millions of innocent people into camps and then, on a whim, to evict the aid workers who are keeping them from dying—is that a policy of ongoing genocide? I am not quite sure what to call it. Whatever it is, it is spectacularly cruel.

Mamdani's other complaint worth taking seriously is his allegation that American journalists and Save Darfur types focused on Arab attacks against African tribes while ignoring Arab attacks on other Arab tribes. If you look at all of these attacks, he says, it becomes clear that the conflict in Darfur was a contest between those without land and those with land, not between Arabs and Africans. Mamdani is certainly right that the contours of the conflict—who was attacking whom—were quite a bit messier than most Darfur activists in the United States understood. And he is probably right that we in the media underplayed the role of land in these disputes.

Yet the Darfur genocide was never fundamentally about what individual tribes did to each other. As Mamdani himself shows, there has been tribal friction in Darfur for a long time. What was different this time, especially from 2003 to 2005, was the behavior of the government, which found itself threatened by African rebel groups and unleashed destruction on African tribes in retaliation. *That* was what caused so many people to be killed in such a short time. Mamdani never makes any real effort to mount a case that this did not happen. Indeed, he cites a Fur leader describing what had unfolded in his homeland: The government "fanned the flames, used the Arabs against the Africans.... Our problem is not with the Arabs, it is with the government." If only Mamdani had paused long enough from his ideological fulminations, he might have realized that in the Fur leader's words lay the essence of what had taken place in Darfur.

III.

The particulars of Mamdani's argument about Darfur fail badly. But what of his bigger idea—his contention that human rights promotion is often synonymous with imperialism? Late in his book Mamdani gets to the responsibility to protect, and denounces it as "a call for an international regime of total paternalism." Does this view have any merit?

Enter Gareth Evans, and with a powerful rebuttal. His book is not exactly scintillating: it features charts, was written by a politician turned policy specialist, and contains sentences such as this one: "The World Summit Outcome Document was clear about that, but in doing so did no more than reflect the spirit and letter of the reports leading up to it, all of which emphasized that, at all stages of the conflict cycle, less intrusive measures were to be preferred to more intrusive ones, and that persuasion was always to be preferred to coercion if it could produce the necessary results." But I encourage readers to persevere. There is an unmistakable humanity that emerges from its dry pages—a humanity that is utterly missing from Mahmood Mamdani's book.

That is because the essence of the responsibility to protect is an insistence that the fate of people matters more than the sovereignty of governments. Traditionally, Evans explains, "what happened within a state's borders and its territorial possessions, however grotesque and morally indefensible, was nobody else's business." "In the history of ideas," he simply and accurately adds, "there have been few that have prevailed to more destructive effect."

To be very clear: Evans is not insisting that the sovereignty of governments is meaningless. Probably because it was formulated by a blue-ribbon commission, his doctrine is loaded down by various attempts to make it sound as banal and unthreatening as possible—even to truly awful governments that deserve to feel a bit more rattled by it. Evans emphasizes, again and again, that military force must be a last resort, and that R2P is more about using diplomacy and measures other than military action to prevent mass crimes than it is about reacting to them with force. This is reasonable enough. Even the most ardent defenders of the responsibility to protect will concede that we must work within the international system that we have. We cannot right every wrong, and we cannot go to war every time a ruler does something terrible to his own people, and we should not propose international doctrines that create an unrealistic sense of what is possible.

But Evans sometimes bends too far in the direction of caution. For one thing, his benchmark for when force is required is excessively conservative. While he calls Darfur a clear "R2P situation," he argues that an invasion of Sudan would do more harm than good, and instead calls for "sustained diplomatic, economic, and legal pressure to change the cost-benefit balance of the regime's calculations." It is true that, with some 17,000 peacekeepers already on the ground and with large-scale killing no longer taking place, the time for an invasion of Darfur has passed. What Evans never acknowledges, however, is that an invasion in 2004—when the genocide was in its worst phase, with civilians being chased from their homes and murdered at an astonishing pace—might have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. In the case of genocide, force must sometimes be a first, or early, resort if it is to have any mitigating effect. This is a matter of effectiveness, not ideology.

Evans also ignores the fact that there are strong arguments for keeping certain punitive military measures, such as targeted air strikes, on the table today as we deal with Khartoum. And he is too sanguine about the ability of the United Nations to serve as a central vehicle for enforcing the responsibility to protect. The U.N. serves many valuable purposes, but it is a harsh place where considerable power is wielded by authoritarian countries such as Russia and China that, for obvious reasons, have little interest in seeing R2P vigorously enforced. If the responsibility to protect is to be put into practice, most of the heavy lifting will have to be done by liberal governments working through alliances like NATO or

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maybe a League of Democracies, rather than begging, probably in vain, for Russian and Chinese cooperation in New York. Witness what happened in Sudan: Turtle Bay delayed for years before finally sending troops to Darfur. And plenty of lives were lost during that time.

Yet all Evans's disclaimers and caveats, all his excessive faith in conservative institutions such as the United Nations, cannot hide the fine and heady idealistic thrust of his doctrine: the dignity of humans cannot be an afterthought to the rights of governments, particularly when those governments do not represent the will of their own people. Surely this must be a core value of liberalism. Yet it is a value that Mamdani cannot grasp. Mamdani maintains that the African Union should be entrusted with situations like Darfur because "unlike the big powers that direct U.N. interventions … practically every country in the African Union can see itself in Darfur's shoes, and that makes a world of difference." But Mamdani conflates peoples with governments. Practically every *government* in the African Union can see itself in Darfur's shoes, and that does make a world of difference—because so many African governments are autocracies that do not want to have their own brutality challenged, and are therefore reluctant to forcefully challenge the brutality of others.

And so it was that, in the midst of the genocide back in 2006, the African Union actually held a summit in Khartoum. Today the organization is headed by none other than Muammar Qaddafi, the man whose imperial adventures helped lay the groundwork for the Darfur genocide. If, like Mamdani, you prioritize the protection of leaders and governments, then the African Union is clearly up to the job. But if, like Evans, you prioritize the protection of the rights of people—well, then things are quite a bit more complicated than Mamdani and the other post-colonialist simplifiers would have you believe.

And where does our president come down in the internecine liberal struggle between human rights and anti-imperialism? Seven months into his administration, it is still hard to tell. In my heart of hearts, I cannot quite believe that Obama subscribes to the dogma that anti-imperialism and the protection of sovereignty are higher liberal values than human rights. During the campaign, he explicitly endorsed the responsibility to protect, and he has surrounded himself with some R2P enthusiasts, such as Susan Rice. Yet in July, when asked about R2P at a press conference in Italy, Obama gave a muddled and equivocal response. "On the one hand we think that respecting the sovereignties of nation states is important," he said. And "on the other hand, where you have nations that are oppressing their people, isn't there an international responsibility to intervene?" The problem, he said, speaking in his seminar mode, "is one of the most difficult questions in international affairs. And I don't think that there is a clean formula." He then added that there are "exceptional circumstances in which I think the need for international intervention becomes a moral imperative," but went on to say that "the threshold at which international intervention is appropriate … has to be very high." He criticized those who believe that "state sovereignty is sacrosanct," before concluding by saying he preferred to "not hypothesize on particular circumstances" but instead "take each case as it comes." It seems clear that this is a president who has yet to decide where exactly he stands on the relative merits of sovereignty and human rights.

Meanwhile Obama has given "human rights fundamentalists"—a phrase that Mamdani uses with derision but to which I answer with pride—other reasons to be concerned. His secretary of state all but told the Chinese during her initial visit to Beijing that human rights would not be a priority in our relationship. Meanwhile, in Darfur, Obama has proceeded with glacial caution. It took him nearly two months to appoint a special envoy, suggesting that Sudan was not the priority it should have been; and now that the envoy is in place, there have been indications that Obama intends to take a conciliatory posture toward Khartoum. One activist who has met with Obama's new envoy, Scott Gration, several times told *The Washington Post*, "He thinks that to keep banging on Khartoum is not the right way." Last month, Gration criticized U.S. sanctions against Sudan while testifying before Congress. Those who care about Darfur are alarmed at what they see as Obama's betrayal. The title of a June email from the Save Darfur Coalition summed up this consensus: "Your action vs. Obama's inaction."

There were passages in Obama's Cairo speech that were encouraging. It was hardly the most full-throated defense of human rights that anyone ever heard from an American president, but at least it acknowledged, obliquely, the central problem in this debate: the difficult relationship between imperialism and human rights. Obama conceded the ugly legacy of colonialism early in his speech, saying that it "denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims"—not a controversial or courageous notion, but in certain settings worth reiterating—before going on to make a fine plea for universal values ("all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose"). He seemed to be implying—why couldn't he have made it explicit?—that it is possible to reject colonialism *and* affirm the activism of human rights. Since this is not the way everyone on the left feels, it would be important to hear a liberal American president say so. It would be even more important to see him act on it.

The relationship between colonialism and human rights is also the specter that hangs over these two books. In *The Responsibility to Protect*, Evans notes the importance of ensuring "that R2P is seen not as a Trojan horse for bad old imperial, colonial, and militarist habits." Mamdani, of course, rejects the idea that it could be anything else. The list of problems with Mamdani's argument is long—there is the inconvenient fact, for example, that R2P's intellectual roots lie partly in the Balkans, where the West sought to protect Muslims from Christians, the exact opposite of what a colonialist would have advocated. But the chief flaw is perhaps the simplest one: all his anti-colonialist outrage notwithstanding, he misunderstands the evil of colonialism.

For Mamdani, colonialism seems to be just a matter of one continent involving itself too heavily in the affairs of another continent—a jurisdictional abuse. But what was it that made colonialism so vile, so repugnant? Surely the essence of colonialism was the denial of freedom. The provenance matters less than the crime. If you read accounts of the savageries that attended European ventures into Africa, and then read accounts of what has taken place these past few years in Darfur, you will be struck by the similarities between them. It is no coincidence that the historian M. W. Daly has described post-independence governments in Khartoum as governing Darfur by "internal colonialism." And this phenomenon is not unique to Sudan. Today many African tyrants treat their people with the same contempt Europeans once did. Is it a

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consolation for the victims that their oppression does not come from the West?

To side with Mamdani's notion of anti-imperialism is to side with these tyrants. And to side with tyrants is to side with something that very much resembles colonialism. This is the contradiction within Mamdani's worldview. It is also, in the end, the reason that the left's great disputation between anti-imperialism and human rights presents a false choice. There is no need to pick sides. To be for human rights always and everywhere is to be against the ugliness of colonialism. And Mamdani's anti-colonialism? It is, paradoxically, an apology for the closest thing our world now has to the colonialism of old.

This is all rather abstract. But one last tale will make things a bit more concrete. Remember those advocates who caused Mamdani such consternation with their calls for U.N. troops or even the United States to take action in Darfur? You might have assumed that they were Americans. They were not. And the scene Mamdani describes was not a campus rally. The gathering of activists and politicians that he narrates took place in El Fasher, a city in Darfur. And the people he quotes as arguing for intervention were Sudanese. It so happens that the views they expressed were identical to the arguments one would have heard from Save Darfur activists here in the United States—and this is because, unlike Mamdani, many of us who advocated for Western intervention in Darfur cared what the people of Darfur actually wanted. Had they told us that they wanted no part of outside intervention, we would have stopped agitating. But they told us the reverse. They gave numerous indications that they expected the world to come to their rescue—most famously in 2006, when Darfuris gathered in a camp and chanted, "Welcome welcome USA, welcome welcome international force!"

Confronted with such views, Mamdani turns patronizing. "Hard as I found it to believe this, I could not deny the evidence of my own eyes and ears," he writes. "The external intervention had produced an internal agency: IDPs [internally displaced persons] demanding to be rescued. Desperately believing in another world, they remained innocent of the politics of this world." These people, innocents? Surely they are some of the most disabused people who ever lived. But Mamdani believes he knows better than the people of Darfur about what should or should not be done to help them. Does such condescension and indifference not itself come with a whiff of colonialism? ◆

Christine Stansell
THE AFTERMATH AND AFTER

THE ANTELOPE'S STRATEGY: LIVING IN RWANDA AFTER THE GENOCIDE
By Jean Hatzfeld
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 242 pp., $25)

KILLING NEIGHBORS: WEBS OF VIOLENCE IN RWANDA
By Lee Ann Fujii
(Cornell University Press, 212 pp., $29.95)

AFTER GENOCIDE: TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE, POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA AND BEYOND
Edited by Phil Clark and Zachary D. Kaufman
(Columbia University Press, 399 pp., $50)

A PARADISE BUILT IN HELL: THE EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITIES THAT ARISE IN DISASTER
By Rebecca Solnit
(Viking, 353 pp., $27.95)

I.

The subject of catastrophe invites the high eloquence of writers, the explanatory power of historians, and the deepest empathy of ordinary people. But the aftermath of catastrophe—that is not yet a subject to which many people kindle. Most of us prefer to back away from the scene of torment, with its inconsolable survivors and its insoluble problems. The survivors, though, cannot back away. They continue to live where the others died. Jean Améry, tortured at Auschwitz, wrote powerfully about the world's readiness to isolate the survivor, who is unable to join in "the peace chorus all around him, which cheerfully proposes: not backward let us look but forward, to a better, common future."

After a century of wars of unprecedented scale and savagery, of mass murders and natural disasters, the problems of post-catastrophic societies are a huge and unconscionably neglected quandary for our times. *Gedenk!* Remember! It is a beloved dictum, generalized from the Holocaust to other genocides and disasters. For the fortunate, the unscarred, the calamity can be comfortably assigned to the past, and the ongoing effects remedied with material assistance and goodwill. But for those who remain on the scene, and suffer for it, neither the present nor the future can be divested of the darkness of the past. They are surrounded by our talk of sympathy and fellow feeling—and they may be forgiven for wondering whether this post-catastrophic uplift is not often a mask for indifference.

So is there a more efficacious response? Are there forms of empathy that are not smug and spurious and self-serving? What moral relationship can outsiders forge with those who have been irreparably and unimaginably harmed? These are ancient problems, addressed by seers and philosophers and divines; but they have practical urgency—and even policy dimensions—for ordinary people in the twenty-first century.

In July 1994, the French journalist Jean Hatzfeld crossed the border from Burundi into Rwanda with the first reporters to arrive at the end of the genocide. Fresh from the war in Bosnia, Hatzfeld had covered conflict and its aftermath in Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East for two decades. In the totality, and the intimate savagery, of the killing, Rwanda was like nothing he had ever seen. Eventually he left journalism to write full-time about the difficulties of rebuilding Rwanda, dividing his time between Paris and Nyamata, a market town in a devastated region in the south of the country. Months of interviews and investigations turned into years, and one book led to another. *Into the Quick of Life*, about the town's survivors, and *Machete Season*, about an imprisoned gang of local perpetrators, published in French three years apart, appeared in English in 2005. Hatzfeld became a familiar figure in Nyamata. Now *The Antelope's Strategy* brings the story up to 2008, with the killers returned from prison and townspeople trying to cobble together a common life under the sign of "reconciliation," which is the official policy of the government and the mantra of Western humanitarian organizations.

Christine Stansell is the Stein-Freiler Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Chicago.

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Too little known in the United States, Hatzfeld's work is a profound inquiry into the character of social relationships in a post-genocide society. There is no comparable work about Jewish survivors in the immediate aftermath of World War II, and none from within Cambodia after 1979, and none, to my knowledge, about Bosnia, where in any case the violence was less total. One would not guess the importance of Hatzfeld's slim volumes from their calm pacing and their modest tone. His books seem at first glance to be compilations of interviews strung together with short commentaries. Ruminative rather than hard-hitting, characterized by sparse exposition and rigorously controlled details, these books are kin to Jan Gross's *Neighbors* and *Fear*, short and definitive and profoundly troubling studies of the murders of Polish Jews by Poles before and after the Nazi genocide. Taken together, Gross's books constitute a pared-down alternative to the big Holocaust classics, as well as a refutation of the genocide melodramas that Hollywood has popularized. Like Gross, Hatzfeld works from an awareness of the essential paradox in writing about genocide, which is that he is bound to describe what is beyond words. Leaving much of the exposition to his tersely eloquent Rwandan subjects, his solution is linguistic restraint and emotional tact, as if too many words and too many feelings would corrupt the account of such a reality.

How are people doing? It is the only question from which any real empathy proceeds; but unfortunately it is rare for outsiders to ask it. The question is at the core of *The Antelope's Strategy*, which takes its title from a survivor's description of sprinting every day for months to outwit the killers. Many readers are likely to have left Rwanda back with Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*, an account of the genocide and the immediate aftermath that ends in 1997. A tiny African country with no book publishers, few writers, and a thin literary tradition has difficulty in keeping the story going. Hatzfeld's assurance to survivors that "you also interest us when you go on living" is admirable, but it goes against the grain of declining Western interest.

As far as most of the literate public is concerned, Rwanda was never so fascinating as in those three months of 1994, and the survivors never so interesting as when they were about to die. This despite the complex and extraordinary history of the last fifteen years. For the *génocidaires* did not fall to their knees, repentant: they fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo and continued to attack across the border. France continued to meddle secretly, and Congo's Mobutu supplied them with arms. The war in Congo since 1997 has killed an estimated 5.4 million people. Meanwhile, Rwanda has been the only nation ever to bring to trial masses of low-level perpetrators; the trials have fueled bitter controversies and have provoked a surge of genocide denial outside the country. But as far as most Westerners—and most Africans, too—are concerned, Rwanda is, well, so 1990s.

Hatzfeld's books, and especially *The Antelope's Strategy*, push against the tight framing of genocide as a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Hatzfeld wants us to see that genocide is a process halted only with great difficulty and political will. In Rwanda, as in Cambodia, the actual violence did not end for years after the spotlight moved on; and even after the countries were finally pacified and secured, the moral and psychological ravages continued—as they do today. Hatzfeld's important book investigates the intimate history of a single town. For a lesser writer, the task of tracing the threads that connect the blood-drenched past and the barely tolerable present would end up in platitudes. But Hatzfeld turns out to be no mere journalist. He is a historian and a moral observer of great distinction.

II.

Compared to postwar Poland, where locals expelled or murdered Jewish survivors who managed to stagger home from the camps, present-day Rwanda looks like a multicultural haven (although there were plenty of murders in Rwanda in the 1990s). Visitors to the country are impressed by what they find there, as I myself have been; and rightly so. The country could have ended up like Somalia, or like Sierra Leone during its cycles of horror. In Nyamata, however, no one is killing anyone. (Or almost no one: Hatzfeld discusses one murder.) Fewer fields lie fallow, and there are fewer abandoned houses scarring the landscape. Hatzfeld stresses that Hutu and Tutsi go to the same churches, and even to the same cabarets, and their children attend the same schools.

But that is not the whole truth. At the end of Sunday services, Tutsis and Hutus huddle in separate groups. As evening falls, you would notice that Tutsis gather to walk home together from town for safety in numbers. On the hills, he reports, "people walking along abruptly cross to the other side of the path, sneering or muttering insults at a passerby." And those picture-perfect schools, where adorably well-behaved children sit on hard benches with no distractions except the teacher (American kids would riot), are the same schools, Hatzfeld points out, where the killers and the victims sat beside each other twenty years ago, schoolyard chums.

Hatzfeld's book begins with the return of a group of convicted killers in 2003, unexpectedly freed from long prison sentences by President Paul Kagame's startling release of some forty thousand *génocidaires*. (Forty thousand!) The decision rocked the country—"stupefied" is Hatzfeld's description of the survivors in Nyamata, "stunned, anxious when not plain terrified." The Tutsis were always a minority, less than 10 percent, but now the survivors—an estimated 130,000 at the end of the genocide—constitute a sliver of the population of 9.7 million. The release of the Hutu killers in 2003 was a huge gamble that they would not endanger the survivors. And most of the gang in *Machete Season* returned, to remake lives alongside people whose loved ones they once hunted down and hacked to death. Reconciliation was the plan. The men had learned in prison to ask forgiveness, and official ideology encouraged the survivors to grant it.

On the first day back, they made their way through town in a long line, looking humbled and wary to the mixed crowd of onlookers, fearful themselves of retribution. Claudine, a teenager when she survived the hunt in the nearby marshes where fifty thousand died, gives an acid description of the psychobabble of reconciliation-speak as they stumbled along: "Their sheepish voices were saying, 'Hallelujah, hallelujah! How are you? May God protect you! Love one another as yourselves. We shall pray for you, that's definite from now on.'" But in the whirlwind of emotions and domestic dramas set off by the homecoming, the program of neighborly truth and reconciliation fizzled. Hatzfeld heard the same complaint from Tutsis over and over: "Not one prisoner came asking for forgiveness."

The killers were incurious about how their victims were faring, and oblivious to what the genocide had wrought, except as it affected their own problems with abandoned fields and wives with babies. "They are afraid to have a conversation," Claudine adds, "so if someone goes near them—quick, they blurt out a *bonjour* to ward off a handshake, behaving like angels but turning away from any gesture of closeness with us." In fact, prison-

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ers were more likely to see themselves as dispensers of justice and forgiveness—taking back wives who had been unfaithful, ousting wrongful occupants of their fields—than as criminals in search of absolution. To be sure, the responses varied: some explicitly rejected remorse, but one hapless man ended up dead because he insisted on talking too much, compulsively confessing to anyone who would listen. He produced too much truth, too many revelations, for the community to bear. Others expressed contrition strategically, always in public, so as to build up credibility with the authorities. They never appealed in private to victims' families.

All this resonates troublingly with Hatzfeld's appalling discovery, in *Machete Season*, that the genocide conferred on the killers a near-complete immunity to guilt, remorse, and the need for contrition. "In the wake of a genocide," he concluded then, "the evasion of the ordinary killers and their families passes understanding." The moral blankness that Hatzfeld encountered in his interviews of perpetrators bore no resemblance to what he had seen after wars elsewhere among soldiers, secret police, torturers, and mass killers, who under pressure routinely confessed and sought release from their crimes. The revelation from central Africa conjoins with the arguments of Jan Gross, Omer Bartov, and others who have studied the perpetrators of the Shoah. It also helps to make sense of the confident prevarications of the former Khmer Rouge *génocidaires* in Cambodia—a trait visible right now on the Web in the testimony of Kaing Guek Eav, formerly the torturer Duch, on trial in Phnom Penh for crimes against humanity before a joint Cambodian/international court. In prison, perpetrators recited a litany of exculpations, which family members echoed. ("It wasn't me, it was the others." "I wasn't there, I didn't see anything," "I didn't want to, but they made me do it.") "Is it possible," Hatzfeld asked in *Machete Season*, "that of all categories of war criminals, the perpetrator of genocide winds up the least traumatized?" The answer was an unequivocal yes.

Thus it is not surprising that in *The Antelope's Strategy* the prisoners' return yields no touching encounters with survivors, no affecting acts of penance or even clumsy attempts at making reparations. Yet it is nonetheless extraordinary to watch through Hatzfeld's eyes as their obtuseness plays out in face-to-face encounters with the victims. Rwanda's densely settled countryside and small-town life make separation impossible. People bump into each other in the market, in church, in clubs, and on the narrow paths that connect the dwellings in the hills. Initially awkward and humble, the ex-cons became more comfortable and assertive.

A survivor describes her encounter with a man who had been her teacher. Wearing a good suit, he was dignified and composed, whereas "I was the one who was startled.... I felt almost humiliated. I swerved to one side." We hear from the killers: Pancrace, a sociable fellow who was twenty-five in 1994, takes a cheerful view of the situation. True, he dreams more of the murders than he did in prison, and he fears that the "traumas" of the survivors might lead them to harm him. (Western aid organizations have introduced "trauma" into popular usage.) But there is no overt nastiness and no apparent danger, and that is enough for him. "I was charged, I was convicted, I was pardoned. I did not ask to be forgiven. After all, it's not worth asking for forgiveness if your plea cannot be accepted." Case closed. The old gang sometimes gets together and reminisces, rather like ex-Nazis in German beer halls in the 1950s. "We visit one another, share drinks and memories. Among ourselves, we feel at ease talking over this or that event in the marshes or in Congo. We enjoy revisiting good and bad moments together. With the Tutsis, though, we feel ill at ease."

A disturbing picture takes shape in *The Antelope's Strategy*. Perpetrators and their families pay lip service to reconciliation; and they do so because their ideas of reconciliation are so faint and undemanding, and they have so little at stake. It is the survivors who lag behind, with their memories, their rage, their futile yearning for vengeance. A killer conveys the hard facts of reconciliation realpolitik: "The Tutsis—you can see they don't work as they used to. They are still desolate. They go on suffering, one way or another, and show themselves to be vulnerable. Their courage fails them if the rains skip a visit. They fall by the wayside." But the Hutus? "They are reinvigorated: they thought themselves finished forever."

An American might say that they wish to "move on," which is our *ne plus ultra* of advice about the experience of tragic loss. "They shorten their memories so they can look toward the future. They don't want to wind their lives around their memories." Another killer explains that Hutus have nothing to run from, whereas Tutsis are always poised to flee: "The survivors always feel death at their heels. They meet an evil look, hear a shout—and they jump sideways." But "as for a killer, if he goes back to his land, he doesn't feel pursued by anything, not even the stench of death he worked in every day."

Innocent Rwililiza seconds this judgment from the other side. He is Hatzfeld's interpreter and longtime aide, and one of twenty survivors of six thousand people who hid fifteen kilometers away in Kayumba Forest. Innocent sees how post-catastrophic life moves away from the survivors, leaving them stranded—a phenomenon also described with excruciating clarity by Jewish survivors in the 1950s. Innocent, too, sees the killers' zest for life, their eagerness to get on with things and leave the past behind. He reflects on the paradox with stunning clarity:

> When I see Hutu families doing well, when I see killers buckling down to the daunting work of clearing the land and gathering in harvests, when I see Hutus applying for good jobs or to study in college, or dressed up on Sundays, in elegant wedding processions—I wonder, Why do we, who ran so hard, find ourselves falling behind as also-rans? With our psychological problems, our meager crops, and our losses? Why do we, who proved each morning how faithful we were to life, to the point of collapsing each evening from exhaustion, receive the smallest share of gratitude? Why is robust strength waiting so long to knock on our doors? Those are questions that humiliate my deepest being.

As the world goes, Innocent is a success: a civic leader, a teacher who is now a head of school, and remarried. (He lost his wife and son in 1994.) Other survivors in Hatzfeld's book have fallen in love, married or remarried, and had children; they run farms and businesses, and hold responsible positions. Yet all this apparent normalcy does not change the fact that they are, in important ways, losers twice over: in the genocide, and in a

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world that wants to leave the genocide behind. They, too, are so 1990s.

Floating through the book is an important group of Nyamata's residents—the dead, who are hidden to more prosaic observers, including their murderers. They keep the survivors company. "They are dead to the living," Innocent explains, "but they have never disappeared for the survivors: I mean that a certain complicity keeps them closer to survivors than to other living souls. They listen to us; they bring us happiness or sorrow." To understand survivors, one must be a connoisseur of the unseen, a student of implication and indirection: how else can we detect the invisible companions, the ghosts, who always attend them? Hatzfeld is the only writer I know who dwells upon these invisible but intimate relationships. They are present from the first pages of *The Antelope's Strategy*, always complicating and disturbing the author's endeavor to record the truth.

Claudine, one of the book's most appealing informants, counters Hatzfeld's incessant hankering for facts with a bit of banter, and then with a reproach that calls up the ghosts. " 'More questions?' she asks in feigned astonishment. 'Still about the killings. So you just can't stop. Why keep on? Why ask me?' " She identifies the survivor's predicament: close enough to the dead to know that they cry out for the last word, and close enough to know that they will never have it. "All the dead moldering away under the papyrus or drying up out in the sun—they've got no way to tell anyone they disagree."

The ghosts raise questions about the ethics of representation, and put the brakes on supplying the ghoulish detail that lends authenticity to the stories that the living consume with a morbid relish. "Describing the way the dead were demeaned, chopped up so viciously, is dishonorable to them," another survivor of the forest flatly asserts. "Giving details about how they were stripped naked or cut short, how they dragged themselves along, how they pleaded for mercy, how they screamed or groaned or vomited or bled—that can be humiliating for them. One must be polite even to the dead, respecting their privacy." In this as in other pressing matters, however, survivors disagree. Another woman insists that survivors are honor-bound to describe the dead, whatever the lurid details or imperfections of their account: "These well-known and dearly beloved dead are the most necessary people to remember when telling about the genocide."

III.

No other post-genocidal society has faced such dire problems of re-integration, and no country has ever created a reconciliation program of this magnitude. In postwar Europe, survivors emigrated to the United States and Israel, leaving non-Jewish Germans to come to terms with their past on their own. In Cambodia, there has been no national reckoning, and in any case the perpetrators constitute a minority in a sea of survivors and their children. In Rwanda, however, the demographic problems of reconstituting a nation out of a vast Hutu majority and a tiny Tutsi remnant are compounded by the brutal fact that the violence of 1994 was produced by a mass mobilization, and was carried out by an army but also by civilians and a volunteer militia.

There are an estimated 175,000 to 200,000 killers, and by now most of them are back in Rwanda, having returned from Congo. Behind them stand bands and battalions of looters, cheerleaders, helpers, and passive onlookers. And further back in this mutilated society there is a confusing gray zone: intermarriage, and the flimsiness of Tutsi and Hutu labels, and the mix of local friendships and animosities make the line between victims and perpetrators sometimes blurry. (But not too blurry: the genocide deniers like to trot out the indisputable fact that the *génocidaires* also killed Hutus, but this is roughly equivalent to saying that the Holocaust was not a war against the Jews because Gypsies, too, were killed.)

Analyzing the complications of culpability and victimhood in Rwanda has attracted a new generation of researchers to the hills. Many of them are especially interested in *gacaca*, the community-based court system implemented in 2002 to try lower-echelon perpetrators. Others are concerned with the roots of the genocide. The scholars tend to be hostile to the Kagame regime, and their stress on the gray area between Hutu activism and Tutsi victimhood challenges the regime's use of ethnic hatred as the overriding paradigm, the satisfactory explanation, for the killings. Lee Ann Fujii's book is a political science study that takes such an approach to an extreme. From fieldwork and interviews in two communities, Fujii argues that the violence was driven by neither Hutu extremist ideology nor hatred of Tutsis, but rather by local loyalties and animosities, aggravated by fears of the war that Kagame's insurgent army had brought to the north. Central to her thesis are the lower-level *génocidaires* whom she interviewed—Fujii calls them "joiners"—who represent themselves as having been cowed by peer pressure and local zealots into participating.

Fujii's rejection of the ethnic-hatred explanation and her substitution of a local-networks explanation will seem like a straw man to anyone outside the business of political science model-building. Historians of collective violence have long recognized that mass murder need not depend entirely on visceral hatred of individuals in—or the entire—targeted group. Mass violence in the service of lofty loathsome ends (ridding the world of verminous Jews or cockroach Tutsis) is often multi-determined in its causality. It often recruits participants for whom the ideological mission gives cover for more banal motives: neighborly grudges and fears, greed for the others' property. The work of mass slaughter always embellishes, and even glorifies, its own purposes for the sake of exculpation, as the killers bond over their ideals and share their pre-existing prejudices about their victims.

Fujii also has the social scientist's habit of slicing and dicing passages from interviews and then taking the fragments at face value: the "linguistic turn" unfortunately passed political science by. But her book demonstrates some of the strengths of the new scholarship as well. The research is assiduous; and Fujii rightly leaves Kigali and the official line behind for the uneasy realities of the countryside,

Night Song

Black cricket, caught in one gear on the cusp,
nibbling at an edge of the firmament,

you are an afterthought of hunger & belief
at twilight, driving the stars ad nauseam.

So, you think you know loneliness, huh?
Are you hiding beneath a stone, little coward,

or clinging to a dead reed? Your song is the only
evidence you're here, a loop of post-modern jive,

the keening of a lonely string across bridge & limbo.
Joy. Woe. A drop of awe craves the lowest note

in the tall grass. The night says, Don't pity
the one tuned by obsession, this old begging.

YUSEF KOMUNYAKAA

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where cohabitation can be very complicated. You can see from her book, for example, how community ties occasionally undercut the genocide venture, as when a man describes participating in a series of murders so as to draw attention away from a Tutsi friend's hiding place. Still, such exceptions cannot persuade the reader that the genocide was not primarily about killing Tutsis.

Perhaps the politics of reconciliation are too ham-handed to deal with self-justifications and explanations like those of Fujii's joiners. The historical precedents suggest that stability in the aftermath of such a catastrophe is conducive to less truth, not more truth. In Rwanda, the hope is that internal peace and security will over the long run allow oblivion and justice to cohabit. *Gacaca* is the centerpiece of the government's attempt to tap the resources of ordinary people in dispensing justice and ascertaining truth. It is winding up its work this year, and as in all things Rwandan, debate rages about its long-term effects.

The critics are vociferous: they include embittered Hutu exiles abroad, some of them in flight from genocide charges, as well as foreign legal observers. The latter tend to know little about Rwanda, but a lot about international law; they deplore the lack of due process in the *gacaca* system, and the paucity of formal guarantees to its defendants. The supporters of *gacaca* retort that community courts were the best that could be done in a shattered country, where only a handful of lawyers and judges survived, and where, in 2000, there were 120,000 prisoners in jail awaiting trial.

The furious temper of the debate about *gacaca* and other matters of reconciliation is evident in Phil Clark and Zachary Kaufman's book, a singular attempt to bring together conflicting points of view. The book begins with an extraordinary preface by Rwanda's president, who, among other things, eviscerates the most hostile essay in the volume, which accuses his government of manipulating genocide memory for Tutsi political advantage. Whether you agree with Kagame or not, the sharp intelligence and moral passion of his piece are undeniable. Clark and Kaufman, practitioners and scholars of international law who are well versed in Rwandan affairs, are rare among Western academics and lawyers in acknowledging the full range of Rwanda's difficulties. They reject the current academic fashion of scapegoating Kagame, and they call attention to two alarming trends in academic studies: "a neglect of basic truths about the genocide, and the proliferation of genocide denial and other forms of damaging revisionism." Their fine tone of broad-mindedness, combined with the unusual presence of Rwandan writers working inside the country, opens up a more realistic and generous assessment of the country's accomplishments, and provides some basis for cautious optimism about the future.

Clark's pieces on transitional justice are among the best in the volume. In a subtle analysis of *gacaca*, he goes beyond the best-among-bad-options defense to enumerate the system's successes. *Gacaca* defied predictions that it would dispense victor's justice or, worse, lynch law. It involved masses of Rwandans in rule-based procedures and deliberations—an impressive experiment in a country that lacks traditions of civil society. The courts (officially numbered at 12,000) tried tens of thousands of cases, and collected masses of evidence on what actually happened in 1994.

No one is satisfied, of course; everyone thinks that *gacaca* is flawed. But perhaps this is its strength: *gacaca* professes to produce no permanent solution, only enough justice and truth for everyone to live with. These trials put me in mind of Amos Oz's remark that in the aftermath of disaster, an ending by Chekhov is preferable to an ending by Shakespeare. In Chekhov, everyone is depressed, bitter, disillusioned, but still on stage and still alive. In Shakespeare, there has been justice, and corpses litter the place.

Hatzfeld is not a political analyst, and he does not weigh in on *gacaca* in particular or the Kagame regime in general. But he does probe at the moral underside. He is impatient with the kinds of prevarications that Fujii treats as quasi-rational motives for participation in 1994. He sees the extremist politics of the Hutu regime as the engine that revved up the genocide, but he has held consistently that the world of Rwanda in 1994 was not devoid of moral choices. Indeed, that is why people suffer, Tutsi as well: the unquenchable remorse of a mother who let go of a child's hand, the daughter who hid while her brother died.

About *gacaca*, Hatzfeld is lukewarm. Inevitably, trials get tangled up in recriminations and pressures. Poor people trade their testimony for money and food. Hatzfeld nicely captures the mixture of lassitude, oratory, and astounding stories of running, hiding, and heartless killing that make up a typical session. "Some gatherings drag out in monotonous monologues, whereas other meetings unleash confrontations of startling violence, psychodramas, nervous breakdowns, provoking gestures of both kindness and rage." Relatives of the "dearly beloved dead" rarely find heart's ease. The survivors in Nyamata report unbearable discomfort and avoid sessions when they can. "Something strange and lost comes over me whenever I hear those killers speak," says a man who went once to the trial of his sister's killer and never went back. His disavowal was, you might say, Chekhovian.

Yet the irony is that these people who seem to others tired and frightened, who shrink at the business of coerced amity, who hold back from attending the tribunals and wish their tormentors dead, stand at the moral center of the community. They, not the killers, are the ones who think seriously about reconciliation. Regardless of their harrowing memories, the survivors are anything but forlorn and mired in the past. Knowing how impossible reconciliation is, they acknowledge what it actually requires, whereas the perpetrators fatalistically shrug off the entire business. Aware of the needy imprecations of the ghosts, the survivors understand what a burden it is to mourn the dead, as Rwandans are constantly adjured to do. Since they are the ones who most clearly see the flimsiness of the vow to "never forget," they are the ones to wonder whether oblivion is the only practical course.

The survivors also grasp that reconciliation means that once again they are the chief victims. They know that it means less truth, not more, about what happened to their loved ones, because for truth to be palatable to the huge Hutu majority it must be evenhanded. "Many people explain the genocide, especially during the mourning period every April, but they avoid the truly devastating facts, names, cruel details, and speak of it as a lesson useful to both sides," notes one cynic. Too much truth—all the facts about what the supposedly innocent neighbor women took from a Tutsi house, or how a crowd of onlookers jeered at someone being tortured—is counterproductive.

Alphonse, a killer, agrees that only censored truth is useful: "Telling how we lived it so zestfully, how hot we were—no. How we cracked jokes while out hunting, how we had a Primus all around on good days, slaughtered the cows, sang in the marshes, how we casually gang-raped unlucky girls and women, how we had contests in the evenings over who had cut the most victims, or made fun of the dying in their agony and all suchlike

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amusements—that doesn't bear telling." And beyond the gang's own actions, what they really cannot talk about is how many people helped them in their foul work: "Saying that everyone joined in except for a few old guys, ladies, and their tiny children—that's another truth that must be filtered."

The truth is too much, and in some sense the survivors are also too much. There is an undertone of resignation in many of their comments to Hatzfeld—an understanding that if they disappeared, Rwanda could move along smoothly. "Perhaps after all the survivors have disappeared," ventures one woman, then anguish will no longer blight the children. "Tutsi survivors have no future," Innocent states firmly. "I say this to you speaking as one of them." Then the well-educated Tutsi elite who run things, many of them returned from exile abroad, can have their way with an evenhanded version of history: "It suits them to present the genocide as a kind of human catastrophe, a dreadful accident of history, in a way, requiring formidable efforts of cooperation to repair the damage."

No one has been able to imagine an alternative to this harsh can-do policy, and Hatzfeld makes no attempt to do so. But he does trace the pressures bearing down on communities such as Nyamata. The great instigators and whitewashers are not government officials, but the humanitarian organizations and foreign donors. By now unencumbered by any lingering embarrassment over the West's abnegation of responsibility in 1994, aid workers are happy to instruct Rwandans on how to be good neighbors. Hatzfeld mentions the millions of dollars that go into seminars on forgiveness and apologizing, and humanitarian organizations produce touching tableaux of harmony for the benefit of foreign visitors.

It seems to have occurred to none of these well-meaning people—the Americans are church people, and teenagers on community service projects, and idealistic college graduates in NGOs—that they are far less sophisticated about forgiveness than the Rwandans themselves, having most likely been limited in their experience to the realms of love, marriage, and parenting, and probably never having seen, say, a neighbor toss a baby down a pit latrine. They may be lending a hand building a hospital, or administering a model farm, which is certainly admirable. Yet everyone from abroad seems to think that they have something to teach the Rwandans about reconciliation. No one considers that it is the other way around.

The politics are clear to the Rwandans: reconciliation "satisfies the authorities, the international donors, and as for the sorrow of the survivors, that's just too bad," maintains Marie-Louise Kagoyire. Innocent Rwililiza, with a sure grasp of the global economy of penance, captures the interplay of self-interest and spurious affect: "If you think about it, who is it talking about forgiveness? The Tutsis? The Hutus? The freed prisoners, their families? None of them. It's the humanitarian organizations. They are importing forgiveness to Rwanda, and they wrap it in lots of dollars to win us over. There is a Forgiveness Plan just as there is an AIDS Plan, with public awareness meetings, posters, petty local presidents, super-polite whites in all-terrain turbo vehicles." That last image packs a punch, because white Land Rovers were the vehicles in which U.N. workers and soldiers hightailed it out of Rwanda as the genocide began.

For all its limitations, the Kagame government has lurched out of the diabolical aftermath of 1994 to hold firm to the idea of a re-integrated country and a plausible common good. Reconciliation may be a fiction, but it is a necessary fiction. Nyamata's Tutsis have a stake in it—their lives and those of their children, all born since 1994, depend on it. The optimists among them acknowledge the demographic realities, but still they offer hope: "Everyone can change," argues the man who as a teenager saw his pregnant sister's belly ripped open. "The Hutus' wrongdoing becomes less serious when life agrees to smile." Sylvie, a social worker, takes a practical view not too far removed from Kagame's: "Why shouldn't it be possible to reconcile? Personally, I think it's quite possible. To live in harmony as before, well, that's out of the question, but why not be eighty percent reconciled?" She continues: "I was cut [by a machete] in my life, but I want to pursue life, absolutely. Even if I no longer trust my neighbors, I still have confidence in myself."

But it is important not to be too carried away by the uplift of all this. For many others, the genocide will never lessen its grip. Hatzfeld gives the last word to Francine, a happily married woman who explains that she has walked out to meet life again but knows that she can never entirely occupy it. "Someone who saw herself in muddy detail as a corpse in the papyrus lying among all the others, comparing herself to all those dead, always feels distressed. By what? I cannot say.... The truth is, if she has lost her soul even for a moment, then it's a tricky thing for her to find a life again." There is no happy ending. There is no ending at all. There is only the search for more life in a place from which life was once banished.

IV.

Rebecca Solnit is a writer who wants sad stories to have happy endings. *A Paradise Built in Hell* professes to have found a little bit of heaven in post-disaster societies. Its argument is that landscapes of ruin and damnation unleash utopian instincts of altruism and mutual aid, which can transform politics-as-usual. Disasters jump-start civil society, which Solnit sees as lifeless and enervated in normal times. "Disaster is an end, a climax of ruin and death," she instructs, "but it also a beginning, an opening, a chance to start over." Catastrophe can engender revolution, when "the very air you breathe seems to pour out of a luminous future, when the people all around you are brothers and sisters, when you feel an extraordinary strength."

Solnit's life-enhancing hells do not include genocide, and except for a long section on New York after September 11 she focuses on the aftermath of natural catastrophes, not on political violence and mass murder. She does allow that some disasters do not produce redemption: Hurricane Katrina is such a calamity without a silver lining. But this raises a deeper problem with her conception of her subject. Is hell to be neatly subdivided, with paradise an option in the safer neighborhoods of fire, earthquake, and terrorist attack, while hurricane zones are red-lined against human happiness?

The ineradicable tragedy that Hatzfeld's subjects attest to—the experience that refuses a silver lining—is completely beyond Solnit's ken. Her book is a work of secular theodicy, an exercise in consolation literature of a particularly American sort—blind to the dark side of human responses to disaster; oblivious to the desolating sadness of the aftermath; indifferent to finality. Who wouldn't prefer to believe that providence has a hand in all our trials, and that we suffer no anguish in vain? In Solnit's bloodied but lucky world, tragedy never has the last word. Instead, an upbeat tone characterizes the morning after catastrophe. You could dismiss this wildly misplaced sunniness as the invention of one writer, were it not that a similar blinkered optimism, the same conviction that no situation lacks a positive effect, also colors the feel-good rhetoric of many humanitarian workers in disaster zones at home and abroad.

Solnit illustrates her theodicy with six disasters: the San Francisco earthquake in

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1906; the explosion of a ship transporting munitions in Halifax harbor, Nova Scotia, in 1917; the London Blitz; the Mexico City earthquake in 1985; New York after September 11; and New Orleans after Katrina. Except for Katrina, as I say, these episodes are depicted as the blossoming of self-governing communities that fulfill a nineteenth-century vision of mutual aid. Solnit finds inspiration in, of all people, Kropotkin. "Imagine a society where money plays little or no role," she rhapsodizes, "where people rescue each other and then care for each other, where food is given away, where life is mostly out of doors in public, where the old divides between people seem to have fallen away." It is a great time to be alive, this moment "when everyone has agency and no one has ultimate authority, when the society invents itself as it goes along."

Government intervention is at best a tolerable intrusion, according to *A Paradise Built in Hell*: governments are tools of grasping elites who want nothing more than to protect their power and their property. It is citizen responders who constitute the real core of help. Official relief takes away their chances to discover all they are capable of. And sometimes government is even lethal: her proof for this claim is San Francisco's response to the earthquake, when she maintains that officials treated the public as the enemy and made the prevention of looting their central task.

It is not that Solnit is wrong about the good-heartedness and self-reliance that can emerge under particular conditions of duress, or about the usefulness of citizen responders, or about the exhilaration of helping others. None of this will come as news to anyone who has lived through a power outage. In San Francisco, homeless people set up soup kitchens in the rubble and organized bucket brigades to fight fires. In New York in 2001, residents poured into the streets to raise money, to offer water and food to anyone in need, to give blood, to honor the dead. The cooperation during the London Blitz is legendary. So yes, adversity brings out the best in some people.

The problem is that up against the historical and emotional reality, Solnit's main argument—her anarchist excitement—collapses. Hells don't make heavens, not now, not ever. Solnit works in black and white, with citizens responding to disasters nobly and helpfully, since that is human nature, while elites—who apparently do not share in human nature—act out of fear and selfishness, always subverting the common good. She has no interest in the vast contrary evidence that disasters can bring out the worst in people as well as the best—which is one reason why government action, as opposed to moist volunteerism, is necessary and desirable. She analyzes at length the depressing and oft-told story of those whites in New Orleans who armed themselves to protect their neighborhoods from the supposed onslaught of marauding blacks, but she does not notice that those unpleasant homeowners also have to be counted as citizen responders, and that only decent police action—which was short in supply in the days after the storm—could have shut them down.

In an odd way, Solnit's book transposes the altruist anti-government sentiments of the right—George H. W. Bush's thousand points of light, and even Herbert Hoover's response to the Mississippi flood ("the cooperative spirit of Main Street is what is putting the Mississippi Valley back on its feet")—into the predilections of the left. When citizens roll up their sleeves to help their neighbors, they can light up a society as bureaucrats never can; but when government help arrives, its efforts are "more effective but seldom joyous." It appears that joy matters more to her than efficacy.

Solnit skips over the massive contradictions in her own examples. Londoners did not survive the Blitz by joyously organizing themselves in a vacuum: the City of London, that is, the municipal government, backed them up with air raid wardens, ambulances, and coordinated fire and digging brigades. As for "the opportunity to build a new superior life structure, almost from scratch," I suppose you could point to the fact that Labour was voted into power after the war, if you believe that Labour represented a superior life structure. But surely this turn of events cannot overshadow the facts about what preceded it: London lost 20 percent of its population, and 40 percent of its industrial workers, to death and relocation, with the East End suffering the most; and many poor neighborhoods never recovered from the loss of life, jobs, and infrastructure. The destruction of communities is not a boon to communitarianism.

In New York, government never broke down: ordinary citizens stepped into the breach in a situation in which the federal government had already reacted immediately with thousands of National Guard, and essential city services for most of the city continued. If there was ever a post-catastrophic paradise, it was surely Manhattan in the fall of 2001, endowed with citizens who were affluent, law-abiding, and non-gun-slinging, and a durable local government that never came close to collapsing under the force of the attack and its three thousand deaths. In her discussion of New York, Solnit does admit that the scenario did not play out in a "great collective renewal," whatever that is—but then neither did the disasters in San Francisco, Halifax, or London.

New Orleans, the city of sorrow, is the one place that gives Solnit pause. "The disaster there was so horrific it begat little of the ebullience of many other disasters," she writes. In New Orleans, of course, the disaster *was* the lack of government, although the book is uninterested in this central fact. Solnit rehearses the tales of terrific citizen responders who came with their boats to rescue people, and neighbors who risked their lives to save others trapped in attics and on rooftops. But what the victims in New Orleans wanted, desperately, was the National Guard and federal troops, not self-actualizing participatory democracy. It takes nothing away from the rescuers' valor to acknowledge that it was the two federal agencies that showed up immediately, the Coast Guard and the Fish and Wildlife Service, that were responsible for the overwhelming numbers of rescues—some thirty thousand of them. These employees were not acting joyously, with an eye to the new day dawning. They were doing their jobs.

New Orleans still longs for government help. *A Paradise Built in Hell* sets a great deal of store by the young volunteers who have come through the city since the storm. Their continued devotion to New Orleans is a story in itself, and quite ill-covered: in many ways they have "kept the lights on in the city so that the rest of the country can't forget," as the New Orleans historian Lawrence Powell once remarked to me. But the tragedy of this situation eludes her. That the reconstruction of a great American city has had to depend on a volunteer army of idealistic ill-paid twentysomethings is not a glory, it is a crime. The book exults in the "fresh energy and chaos" that they brought to the city; but the last few years have shown that the longer individual volunteers stay and the more they dig in, the less ebullient and full of quick answers they are. Those invested in joining a "beloved community" can only go so far in a city where the daily grind of reconstruction makes people feel anything but beloved. New Orleans needs more than volunteers and self-actualization. It needs generous and well-administered federal aid, and decent city government

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to replace the mess of corruption and ineptitude. *That* would be paradise.

Solnit's reliance on participants once or twice removed from the catastrophe wears thin: memories of survivors who were children at the time, and protected by their parents; who came onto the scene as helpers; who look back on catastrophe from a vantage point of decades; who did not lose any loved ones in what they endured; or who never lived through a catastrophe at all. Although the book brings in a survivor every once in a while, it is fundamentally incurious about what life is really like for people who continue to exist in the long aftermath. In this, and in its many rosy views, it backs away from the bottomless sadness of survivors and chooses to peddle an updated version of the refrain that appalled Jean Améry half a century ago: not backward but forward to a better future.

A quasi-religious language suffuses *A Paradise Built in Hell*, beginning with its title. Solnit's classless self-governing society resembles nothing so much as a state of grace; and her uprising of the spirit—"the joy in disaster"—evokes the exaltation of a revival. "Again and again I have seen people slip into this realm and light up with joy. The lack of a language doesn't prevent them from experiencing it, only from grasping and making something of it." Solnit here taps into a repository of Protestant millennialism that lies deep in the American psyche. More precisely, it is an Arminian understanding of sin and salvation. God dispenses suffering as He pleases, but we can make of it what we will, using the test to redeem ourselves and deliver ourselves into His hands, washed of our sins.

Solnit is right that desperate situations can awake dormant impulses of selfless service. Yes, the world needs kindness and generosity, and both sometimes flourish in the midst of calamity. But let us honor affliction with our own sobriety. To offer help is not to put yourself in the way of something big, such as the eschatological movement of history; it is to acknowledge in the face of suffering that whatever you do is very small. Is empathy the goal in post-catastrophic circumstances? Then seek humility, not bliss. "Before you mention Grace / Mind that you do not deceive yourself and others," cautioned Miłosz, a poet who had seen the hells that the enthusiasts of paradise inflicted on the earth. It is a warning about clarity in an emergency, about the pitfalls of self-delusion in any politics of transcendence. ◆

Edward Glaeser
WHAT A CITY NEEDS

WRESTLING WITH MOSES: HOW JANE JACOBS TOOK ON NEW YORK'S MASTER BUILDER AND TRANSFORMED THE AMERICAN CITY
By Anthony Flint
(Random House, 256 pp., $27)

For urbanists and others, the battle between Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs was the great titanic struggle of the twentieth century. Like the bout between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling, their conflict has magnified significance, as the two figures have become symbols. Jacobs is the secular saint of street life, representing a humane approach to urban planning grounded in the messy interactions of the neighborhood. Moses is the icon of infrastructure established by power, the physical reconstruction of cities with great bridges and wide expressways and tall apartment buildings. The actual projects that fueled their acrimony may now be curiosities of urban history, but the ideological conflict embodied by Jacobs and Moses continues to rage in every growing city in the world. The growth of Shanghai may be described as Moses on steroids, whereas the land-use restrictions in Mumbai honor a central element of Jacobs's legacy.

Anthony Flint's book is a timely retelling of their battles. The federal government, under pressure of an economic crisis but also for reasons of principle, has now renewed its commitment to infrastructure, but it has done so in a way that preserves existing biases. The transportation spending in the Obama administration's recovery program targets highway-heavy areas, and promises twice as much aid, per capita, to the ten least-dense states as to the ten most-dense states. And beyond our borders, nothing less than the economic and environmental future of the world is tied to urban planning decisions now being made in China and India. So it is a good time to re-acquaint ourselves with Jacobs and Moses.

While Moses dominated New York's urban growth for the forty years that ended in 1968, Jacobs has owned the last four decades. She had a certain advantage—it is ironic to say so, in the light of her adversary's immense political power—in establishing her place in history: she was a great writer, and we can hear her still through her own words. Another great writer, Robert Caro, produced the definitive biography of Robert Moses; and unfortunately for the master builder, *The Power Broker* was so skillfully done, so painstakingly researched, that history has generally accepted its depiction of Moses as an unfeeling, power-mad figure who did much to harm New York. Two years ago, Hilary Ballon and Kenneth Jackson presented an alternative to Caro, a more sympathetic depiction of Moses, in an exhibition partly at the Museum of the City of New York and in an accompanying catalogue. Flint is not a revisionist of any sort, but his book does provide a somewhat balanced picture of New York's answer to Baron Haussmann.

Robert Moses was born to prosperous parents in 1888 and grew up in New Haven and New York. After graduating from Yale, he received a doctorate in political science from Columbia. Moses's charging intelligence and idealism gained him the patronage of Belle Moskowitz, a progressive reformer and ally of Al Smith, the Good Government governor from Tammany Hall and the Fulton Fish Market. In the 1920s, parks were part of the Good Government agenda, and Moses became Al Smith's parks guy. After all, Moses lived on Long Island, which made him more sylvan than most of Smith's friends.

Parks gave Moses a path to power. By building parkways and popular beaches, Moses demonstrated his skills as a project manager, a bill drafter, and a public persuader. In those early days, he displayed an extraordinary ability to divide and defeat the local opposition to his projects. Moses's reputation for probity and competence enabled him to thrive even during the Roosevelt years, despite the mutual antipathy between the two men. (Their feud began in the 1920s, when Roosevelt chaired the Taconic State Park Commission and Moses refused funding for Hudson Valley Parkway.) Moses managed to get control over much of

Edward Glaeser is the Glimp Professor of Economics at Harvard. He directs the Taubman Center for State and Local Government and the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston.

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the federal spending that was slated for New York, and he used the tolls from his bridges as a sort of venture-capital fund for public infrastructure. While we so often wonder what happened to our tax dollars, the products of Moses's spending are perfectly plain: they surround New York. If you travel to midtown Manhattan from LaGuardia Airport, you will drive on a Moses bridge to a Moses highway and look from your window at Moses buildings and Moses parks.

By the 1950s, Moses's achievements had made him a public hero. I may have been one of Manhattan's most athletically inept children, but even I have fond memories of swimming in pools and beaches that Moses created, and of playing blissfully in his parks. If Moses had retired at the age of sixty-five, he would have left in a blaze of glory, beloved by his city and his state. But the unextinguishable and obsessed man kept on building for another fifteen years. He built much during those later years, including Lincoln Center and the 1964 World's Fair—but history's tides were turning against him. More specifically, Jane Jacobs was turning against him, as was the new urban sensibility that she represented.

While many of Flint's readers will have read Caro's vast masterwork on Moses, few will have perused Alice Alexiou's valuable biography of Jacobs, which appeared in 2006. Flint's background material on Jacobs will therefore come as news to many people, and Flint understandably leads with her story, despite the fact that she was born almost thirty years after Moses. At the time of the first fight between Jacobs and Moses in the early 1950s, Jacobs had moved from Scranton to Greenwich Village, worked as a stenographer, a writer, and an editor, married an architect and had three children. In 1952, she began writing for *Architectural Forum* and managed, despite the lack of any formal training, to become a powerful public voice excoriating what she called the "anti-city ideals of conventional planning."

In her battle with Moses, Jacobs was a foot soldier, one of many neighborhood mothers who fought to save Washington Square Park from Moses's four-lane extension of Fifth Avenue that was intended to snake through the greenery. The mastermind behind the community opposition to the road was Shirley Hayes, a Broadway performer turned Greenwich Village mother. Hayes seems to have taught Jacobs something about organizing opposition to big government projects, which only confirmed Jacobs's views about the ability of urban density to spread knowledge from person to person. Eleanor Roosevelt was the star member of Hayes's team. The fight lasted from 1952 to 1958, and Hayes, Roosevelt, and Jacobs beat Robert Moses.

The master builder's defeat was an early warning about the sea change in public attitudes towards big government projects. As Alan Altshuler and David Luberoff have ably chronicled in their book *Mega-Projects*, there were three epochs in postwar public building. In the 1950s, during Moses's heyday, governments happily developed roads, bridges, and stadiums, and ignored the ill-organized local opposition. In the 1960s and 1970s, activists such as Jacobs learned how to use the media and political pressures to stop the bulldozers. In the most recent era, a few megaprojects, such as the Big Dig in Boston, were resumed, but these had to move mountains and spend billions to avoid angering anyone.

Jacobs's second fight with Moses concerned her own home. Just as she was writing her great denunciation of urban renewal, she learned that her block had been declared "blight" and therefore slated for demolition. Moses had grown up in the Progressive movement, for which slum clearance was a significant objective. In 1937 and in 1949, encouraged by real estate developers, the federal government widened the war against slums to also include "blight," an ill-defined term which could mean any place where properties were less than pristine.

Moses had relinquished his position as Sultan of Slum Clearance in 1960, but Flint writes that "it was entirely plausible—and, to Jacobs, seemed likely—that on the way out Moses suggested where the bulldozers should go next and steered his successors right to Hudson Street." Moses's influence was enormous, so I suspect that Flint is right on this point, but I am less sure about his allegation that urban renewal in "the West Village had the whiff of revenge," a payback for Moses's "first major defeat." Everything we know about Moses's tastes in urban planning suggests that he would have liked to rebuild the West Village, whether or not it happened to house Jane Jacobs.

Jacobs now took on Shirley Hayes's leadership role and served as co-chair of the Committee to Save the West Village. She mobilized hundreds of voters to confront and to harass the urban renewal project at every turn. As Jacobs told *The New York Times*, "We had been ladies and gentlemen and only got pushed around. So yesterday we protested loudly." Smart politicians latched onto Jacobs's coattails and became advocates for her community. One assemblyman angrily told the city planners that "you have sent the urban renewal program of this city, state and federal government back to the dark ages of Robert Moses, and his arbitrary and inhuman procedures." Moses was no longer a champion of good government, but a symbol of dictatorial power.

Jacobs had more than her army of activists. She had also an intellectual ballista pointed right at the heart of urban renewal. In 1961, in the midst of the West Village controversy, Random House published *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs's attack on all that was wrong in postwar urban planning. Against a sterile engineering approach to cities that emphasized square footage and traffic flows, Jacobs offered an anthropological analysis of how neighborhoods actually work. She argued for the benefits of foot traffic made easier by small blocks, and noted that "a well-used street is apt to be a safe street." She advocated low buildings, where apartments were connected with the streets. She lauded the mixed-use development that was being banned by the city's new zoning code. She saw nothing good in the Corbusier-inspired vision of vast high-rises and big boulevards, and nothing wrong in her run-down but well-functioning neighborhood in the Village. She wanted to house people "in concentrations both dense enough *and* diverse enough to offer them a decent chance of developing city life."

Elite architects and urban planners may not have liked Jacobs's book, but the public certainly did. After all, high-rise public housing was a fiasco, and Moses did indeed destroy well-functioning but poorer neighborhoods, such as Tremont in the Bronx. Jacobs was a sympathetic figure both to the New Left, who liked her willingness to fight the establishment, and to the New Right, which had little fondness for large public schemes to better mankind. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* may still be the most indispensible volume in any urbanist's library. I do not quite recall where I put my Mumford or my Corbu, but my Jacobs is always close at hand.

The book's great strength lies in Jacobs's ability to analyze the interplay between structure and society at the block level. She walked and looked and used her acute intellect to understand her city. Her lack of academic training was probably a strength, since few preconceived

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ideas or methods distorted her understanding of the street. Jacobs also displayed an utterly ferocious courage in taking on the established wisdom of the world's urban planners. But that was not new for her: in 1952, at the height of McCarthyism, she had told the Loyalty Security Board to take a walk.

The biggest and most famous fracas between Moses and Jacobs concerned the Lower Manhattan Expressway, or Lomex. Moses's idea was simple: an elevated highway cutting across lower Manhattan that would connect the Holland Tunnel with the Williamsburg and Manhattan Bridges. From an engineering and planning perspective, it made perfect sense. Unfortunately, there was the small matter of the two thousand or so families that would need to be relocated, and the streets that would thereafter remain in the shadow of the great road.

Jacobs, of course, wanted none of it, and she was back in force leading the opposition. By the 1960s, Moses was beginning to look like the underdog. In 1962, Jacobs managed to get Lomex killed, but Moses brought it back the next year. In 1965, John Lindsay, New York's new mayor, hoisted Jacobs's banner, but still Moses kept fighting. In 1966, a building on the proposed path of the Lomex was changed from being urban blight to a designated and protected landmark. In 1968, Jacobs managed to get herself arrested protesting against the lack of democracy in urban planning, and Moses was finally through. Nelson Rockefeller, the state's governor, took away the old man's commissions, and for the first time in forty years Robert Moses was no longer the infrastructure king of New York state.

The inclinations of history continued to favor Jacobs. The Vietnam War and Watergate further discredited the high-handed tactics of leaders such as Moses; America embraced grassroots activists such as Jacobs. In 1974, Caro published his biography of Moses, which suggested that the master builder played a not inconsiderable role in "the fall of New York." As the automobile became an environmental and social villain, Moses's highways looked worse and worse. Jacobs left the United States for Canada in 1968, to protest the Vietnam War and protect her sons from the draft. She lived in Toronto until her death in 2006, a cherished, almost saintly figure. Moses died in 1981, a vilified has-been who seemed to represent a dark age in American cities.

Yet there is something quite wrong in the completeness of Jane Jacobs's victory, and something unjust about the wholesale denigration of Robert Moses. As individuals, there is much to like about both people. It is easy to idolize a woman without a college degree whose brilliant books changed the world's understanding of cities. And Moses gave his life to his city and his state, earning far less than he could have in the private sector, and soldiered on, fighting against constant opposition for what was, in its time, widely understood as good policy.

We should not revile public servants as dedicated and capable as Moses. He may have been wrong, but he was not a villain. Moreover, much of what Moses did was *not* wrong. His parks and his pools were a great blessing to New Yorkers in the years before air conditioning. His roads and his bridges were not all bad, either. Millions of Americans have saved hours, months, and years by taking advantage of this transportation infrastructure.

Jacobs was right that cities are built for people, but they are also built around transportation systems. New York was America's premier harbor, and the city grew up around the port. The meandering streets of lower Manhattan were laid down in a pedestrian age. Washington Square was urban sprawl in the age of the omnibus. The Upper East Side and Upper West Side were built up in the age of rail, when my great-grandfather would take the long elevated train ride downtown from Washington Heights. It was inevitable that cars would also require urban change. Either older cities would have to adapt, or the population would move entirely to the new car-based cities of the Sunbelt.

When Henry Ford made the car affordable, millions of Americans understandably wanted to drive. After all, the average commute by car in the United States is twenty-four minutes, whereas the average commute by public transit is forty-eight minutes. The automobile certainly created great challenges for every older city that was built at highway-less higher densities. No matter what Jacobs thought, there simply was not a car-less option for New York. For the city to continue growing and changing and leading the world, it needed to be retrofitted for the automobile. And that enormous task was given to Moses. Perhaps he did too much for the car. I am certainly on Jacobs's side on the Lomex issue, and cannot possibly approve of the destruction of Tremont; but New York's fall would have been far more precipitous if it had ignored the automobile altogether.

It is hard today to accept the allegation that Moses was responsible for New York's demise. The troubles that New York experienced in the 1970s were hardly unusual. Except for Los Angeles, every one of the ten largest American cities in 1950 lost at least 10 percent of its population over the next thirty years. New York is exceptional not in its decline but in its resilience, and perhaps Moses deserves some credit for that. New York and Los Angeles are the only two of those ten big mid-century cities that have gained population over the past sixty years.

Jacobs did help to make public decisions more accountable, which is an incontrovertibly good thing. There is little to like in arbitrary public power—but at this point the pendulum has swung too far. Today it often feels as if every neighbor has veto rights over every new project, public or private. When Jacobs's heirs argue for limits on eminent domain and expensive boondoggle projects, I stand with them. When they impose more and more restrictions on private owners building on their own land, I shake my head. Jacobs herself did not oppose only highways and urban renewal, but also far more benign private projects such as NYU's library. Education is crucial to urban success. Surely a twelve-story university library would not have hurt Greenwich Village.

Jacobs's greatest insight was that cities succeed by enabling people to connect with one another. Humans are a social species, and our greatest gift is our ability to learn from others. Many of the finest achievements of human civilization occurred because smart people learned from one another in cities. As Jacobs understood better than anyone else, the chance encounters facilitated by cities are the stuff of human progress. But Moses was also right that cities need infrastructure. People cannot just argue forever on an unpaved street corner. They need homes to live in and streets to travel along and parks for relaxation. Jacobs underestimated the value of new construction—of building up.

The Death and Life of Great American Cities argues that at least one hundred homes per acre are necessary to support exciting stores and restaurants, but that two hundred homes per acre is a "danger mark." After that point of roughly six-story buildings, Jacobs thought that neighborhoods risked sterile standardization. (The one public housing project that Jacobs blessed, at least initially, had only five stories.) But keeping great cities low means that far too few people can enjoy the benefits of city life. Jacobs herself had the strange idea that preventing new

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construction would keep cities affordable, but a single course in economics would have taught her the fallacy of that view. If booming demand collides against restricted supply, then prices will rise.

The best way to keep cities affordable is to allow private developers to build up and deliver space. Jacobs was right that high-rise public housing is a problem, as street crime is much more prevalent in high-rise, high-poverty neighborhoods. But in more prosperous, privately managed buildings, height is not a problem. If you love cities, as Jacobs certainly did, then presumably you should want the master builders to make them accessible to more people.

Successful cities need both the human interactions of Jane Jacobs and the enabling infrastructure of Robert Moses. Anthony Flint has done a fine job describing the battles between these two great figures, but unlike the Louis-Schmeling fight, their conflict should not be resolved. An absolute victory for Moses leads to heartless cities, built to accommodate cars but not pedestrians, with high-rise buildings that are disconnected from their streets. An absolute victory for Jacobs means a city frozen in concrete with prices that are too high and buildings that are too low. New building is needed to welcome the diversity that makes urban magic. No city can survive without the personal engagements beloved by Jacobs, but no city can thrive without master builders such as Moses. Mumbai and Shanghai had better take note. ◆

Edward Luttwak
THE BEST AND THE FASTEST

THE END OF EMPIRE: ATTILA THE HUN AND THE FALL OF ROME
By Christopher Kelly
(W. W. Norton, 350 pp., $26.95)

EMPIRES OF THE SILK ROAD: A HISTORY OF CENTRAL EURASIA FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO THE PRESENT
By Christopher I. Beckwith
(Princeton University Press, 472 pp., $35)

The extraordinary reputation of Attila and his Huns requires an explanation, because they had so much competition. Their apogee, until Attila's death in 453, came just after the invasions that were extinguishing the Roman Empire in the west: the invasions of Germanic Alamanni, Burgundians, Ripuarian Franks, Salian Franks, Gepids, Greuthungi and Thervingi Goths, Heruli, Quadi, Rosomoni, Rugi, Sciri, Suevi, Taifali, and the original Vandals, as well as Alan horsemen of Iranic origin and probably Slavic Antae as well. Yet it is the Huns who are more vividly remembered than any of them, including Alaric's Goths, who in 410 had the historical distinction of being the first to sack Rome since the Gaulish raid of 387 B.C.E. (and to loot the accumulated wealth of centuries of empire); and more vividly remembered than the proverbial Vandals, who later inflicted greater damage by cutting off North Africa's grain supply to Italy.

It was the same at the time. In the writings of their contemporaries, the Huns were singled out as the most dangerous of the barbarians, even before Attila rose to power to unify the Hun clans and harness more numerous Germanic camp-followers. Ecclesiastical writers identified the Huns with the ancient Massagetae and Ezekiel's Magog, and the Goths with his Gog, and trembled for the fate of the world. Secular writers rightly feared for the survival of the empire once Attila arrived on the scene. Even in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, the comparatively illiterate ones, Attila's name keeps appearing in the scattered writings that have reached us: the Old English poem "Widsith" ("I visited Wulfhere and Wyrmhere … when the Gothic army with their sharp swords had to defend their ancestral seat against Attila's host"); the Icelandic Old Norse poem "Lay of Hloth and Angantýr," in which Attila is Hloth's grandfather; the *Volsunga Saga*, in which Attila is killed by Gudrun, who had been forced to marry him, a story derived from the older *Atlakviða*, "The Lay of Atli," or from the longer version in *Atlamál hin groenlenzku*, the "Greenland Ballad of Atli"—Attila's fame had reached even that most remote of places, Ultima Thule. The far better known *Nibelungenlied* retains a folk memory of Attila's massacre of the Burgundians of King Gundahar in 437: as Wagner fans know, the murdered Siegfried's vengeful wife Kriemhild marries Etzel/Attila king of the Huns, and bloody mayhem ensues. Ekkehard of St. Gall's Waltharius is far more fortunate: given as a hostage to Attila, Waltharius wins great renown as a warrior in his service, before fleeing with much gold from his court.

All this created a huge problem for the greatest scholar who ever studied Attila and the Huns, the seriously multilingual Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, on whom Christopher Kelly must still rely, and also for Edward Thompson, the author of the standard but now dated English-language work on the subject, *The Huns*, which appeared in 1948. The former was a sophisticated neo-Marxist and the latter a crudely Stalinist Marxist (at one point he rather hilariously attacks Roman magnates as class enemies), but both accepted the widely fashionable Marxist notion that individuals are ultimately insignificant as compared to historical processes. They adhered also to the theory of successive historical stages, according to which the later-stage "slave-owning empire" could have nothing to fear from earlier-stage "pastoral" Huns.

Thompson, who first usefully deployed the Latin and Greek evidence—notably the writer Priskos of Panium, who spent much time at Attila's court—dealt with the problem by strenuously arguing that Attila was a small-time extortionist and bungler whose forces were largely destroyed in 451, when he attempted his only great offensive into what is now France, and was intercepted by the Roman-Visigothic coalition assembled by Aetius. (The latter is the leading contender for the role of "the last Roman.") Thompson did not explain how Attila was able to invade northern Italy in the following year with a formidable force. Even the infinitely more sophisticated Maenchen-Helfen—whose posthumous *The World of the Huns* exploited the extensive Russian-language literature on Central Asia and nomadism, as well as the extant archaeological evidence and his own ethnographic research in Tuva—compared Attila to the ephemeral Gothic warlord Theodoric Strabo, known as "the Squinter," who extorted two thousand pounds of gold from the eastern emperor Leo in 473.

The facts are otherwise. The Huns were a mere herd of clans before Attila made himself their sole ruler, after killing his brother Bleda. Out of these clans he created a powerful if rudimentary state that sent and received envoys, and

Edward Luttwak's new book, The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire, will be published by Harvard University Press in the fall.

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was organized enough to mount long-range expeditions. His father had been a chief, even a paramount chief perhaps, but it was by his own wits that Attila became much more than that—a charismatic king, or *rex*, the Roman title for a barbarian ruler of substance.

Christopher Kelly's book is a semi-popular work, unlike his essential *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*. It includes at least one implausible story because it is too good to leave out—the marriage offer supposedly sent to Attila by the emperor's disgruntled sister Honoria—and it excludes at least one essential research advance, but Kelly's book is certainly not unscholarly and it does present more than enough evidence to show that Attila's talents mattered a great deal. He had the political ability to unify under his undisputed command not only the naturally fissiparous Huns (nomads must diverge to find pastures), but also a great many Goths, Gepids, Heruli, Alans and even dissident Romans. When Attila died, the Hun power quickly fell apart.

Very active diplomatically—unlike modern barbarians, he respected diplomatic immunity—Attila was able to manage relations successfully with both the consolidating Constantinople branch of the empire and its disintegrating western branch. (The empire was still one; only its administration was divided.) Above all, Attila had the strategic ability to magnify his power by combining military action with skillful diplomacy—he always found a legalistic justification for his demands. And to these talents he added terror, or the propaganda of the deed, as with the utter destruction of the great fortress-city of Aquileia at the northeastern passage into Italy, which gained him the surrender of rich Milan and many other cities.

In our day, many historians do not have a problem with Attila or any other "Great Man of History." They accept the very personal role of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and the rest in shaping history, "bottom-up" history notwithstanding; and so they can accept Attila's importance as a historical factor as their Marxist predecessors could not. But they have a terrific problem with the Huns, and the reason for this is simple. It is the nullification of military historiography in contemporary academia. "Strategy" exists in a few government or political science departments, but such "strategists" steer clear of military history. The academic consensus that all wars are pointless apparently extends also to the study of their history.

There is almost no place, and almost no prestige, for anyone who wants to research and teach how and why battles and wars were won or lost—that is, military history strictly defined—as opposed to social history, economic history, and some forms of political history, including newly rehabilitated biographical approaches but excluding "kings and battles." Even research on "presidents and wars" is unwelcome unless there are cognitive or psychological pathologies to be studied. And there is the added impediment that military historiography is an arcane field, requiring serious archival research, often in languages other than English.

While scholarly readers have an insatiable demand for military historiography, and students are very keenly interested in battles and wars, the faculties at our universities prefer to scant both. Appoint a military historian? The eminent Chicago Byzantinist Walter Emil Kaegi has explained why it almost never happens: tactics cannot matter, weapon techniques cannot matter, operational methods cannot matter, theater strategies cannot matter, because wars do not matter—as a subject of their own, rather than as epiphenomenal expressions of other causes and realities. Given the academic consensus that wars are almost entirely decided by social, economic, and political factors, there is simply no room for military history as such.

That makes it impossible to explain why anyone would have been bothered by the arrival of the Huns. As steppe nomads with vast herds of horses, they were necessarily very few in number, as compared to agricultural populations; and they were less productive in every way, and thus very weak socially and economically. How, then, to explain their extraordinary prominence? Kelly goes beyond the conventional mode of analysis and bravely ventures into some of the military detail so as to provide the answer. It is that the Huns frightened everyone because they introduced a wholly new form of warfare.

As a former officer with combat experience, the contemporary historian Ammianus Marcellinus accurately describes their innovative tactics:

> They fight from a distance with [arrows] … then they gallop over the intervening spaces and fight hand to hand with swords … and while the enemy are guarding against wounds from the sharp [sword] points, they throw strips of cloth plaited into nooses [lariats] over their opponents and so entangle them that they fetter their limbs and take from them the power of riding or walking.

The first alarming novelty was that Hun arrows could kill at unprecedented ranges, because they were launched by the tendon-and-bone composite reflex bows that they introduced—the most powerful personal weapons of antiquity, far more lethal that the familiar reflex wooden bows ridiculed by Homer's spearmen. The second alarming novelty was that the Huns were trained from childhood as mounted archers. Like the Ogasawara and Takeda virtuosos one may still admire in Japan, they could hit targets even at a full gallop, even with sideways shots, and could turn for rearward shots. Hence they could stay out of range while they kept launching arrows into enemy ranks, before riding in for the kill with their swords and lariats.

These revolutionary tactics would become familiar to the surviving Romans of Byzantium, who learned to imitate them very well, which was one reason they survived, as the Huns were followed down the centuries by all the other horse-herding nomadic mounted archers who arrived from the great Eurasian steppe: the Avars, early Türks, Onogur-Bulghars, Khazars, Pechenegs, Magyars, Cuman/Kipchaks, Mongols, and finally the men of Timur, whom we know as Tamerlane. Each of these warrior peoples played an important role in European history,

Eschatology

In the long run, we are all dead.
—John Maynard Keynes

Gray pelt of mouse limp in injury
beneath the kitchen's leaking ceiling,

gray subtraction. I crouch in a cramped
room displacing my mind, trying to put it

for an instant into your body.
The bait was irony working again,

you can taste the bitter end.
Perhaps you somehow know

there's nothing to be afraid of:
the irony of nothing, taking

so much of our attention,
power of the vacuum

ripping us again and again
out of our upholstered moment.

KATHLEEN WINTER

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but they could not be studied adequately so long as classicists and medievalists ignored the Chinese dynastic histories, or tried to get by with translated cribs of brief extracts. It is only in recent decades that these vast texts, which include Han and Tang military reports from the frontiers, have started to be seriously utilized by Western historians. Christopher Beckwith's book presents an interim report for the general reader, enriched by Tibetan material. (Yes, they too were imperial for quite a while.)

Beckwith's many quirky personal asides about this and that do not detract from the formidable scholarship with which he surveys the nations and states that waxed and waned in what is perhaps best called Inner Asia from the earliest times to the present. But this is no mere survey. Beckwith systematically demolishes the almost universal presumption that the peoples and powers of Inner Asia were typically predatory raiders, and thus supplied themselves by extracting loot and tribute from more settled populations. He demonstrates that it is much more accurate to view them as traders and the protectors of traders. Indeed, they were the quintessential traders of the Silk Road, alongside a few competitors from Europe and the Middle East. (The Han Chinese stayed at home.) The geographic boundaries of Inner Asia, or Central Eurasia as Beckwith prefers to call it, and thus the boundaries of his work, are not fixed over time because the size and reach of Inner Asian powers varied greatly—the Mongols, most famously, were once simultaneously present in what is now Poland, Syria, and China.

The space allowed to Inner Asian powers began to shrink from the seventeenth century because of the eastward expansion of Russian military settlers, the Cossacks of Siberia, and the westward expansion of the Ching dynasty. It was the Ching rulers—themselves alien northern conquerors who long retained their distinct "Manchu" identity and Tungusic language—who endowed China with the greater part of its present territory, by conquering what is now the huge province of Xinjiang, once known as Turkestan, and the largest parts of two other provinces, Qinghai and Inner Mongolia. The Ching also imposed something of a protectorate over Tibet. In expanding all the way east to the Pacific Ocean, the Russians mostly remained beyond the northern limits of Inner Asian powers, but eventually they did reach the Mongolian territories, which they still retain.

ANTHONY RUSSO

The convergent expansion of Russians on one side and the Ching dynasty on the other extinguished states and fragmented peoples. Today there are the Mongols of the independent Republic of Mongolia, and many more Mongols in China's Inner Mongolia (though it has a large Han majority), and more Mongols in Xinjiang, and the Mongolic Buryats of the Russian Federation. The Tibetans, who once ruled an empire of their own, are now both ruled and fragmented, with populations of Tibetan culture from India's Ladakh to northern Nepal's Mustang, the northern part of Sikkim, the entire Kingdom of Bhutan, India's Arunachal Pradesh, the Tibetan Autonomous region of China, and the Tibetan parts of three other provinces.

Beckwith ably explains how all this came about. With his work, there is finally a fitting counterpart to Peter B. Golden's magnificently comprehensive *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, based on Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Greek, Latin, and European medieval sources. By reading just two books anyone can now sort out Charlemagne's Avar Ring, the Golden Horde, modern Kazakhs and Uzbeks, ancient Scyths, Borodin's Polovtsian dances (they were Cumans), present-day Turks, Seljuks, Ottomans, early Türks, and Bulghars and Bulgarians, among many less familiar states or nations.

But not the Huns. They were long believed to be Xiongnu or Hsiung-nu defeated in China, and then believed to be anything but that. There was even a tenuous Iranic theory. But new evidence has now emerged in favor of Xiongnu origins, in the one important piece of research that Kelly has overlooked. It was presented in 2005 in an essay by Étienne de la Vassière that exemplifies recent archaeological advances, of which there could be many more if archaeologists could operate more freely in the Stans, and if the Chinese would take a few pennies from mega-construction projects to fund proper critical editions of the dynastic histories, now available only as mere reproductions or at best as transcriptions of the ancient woodblock prints, essentially unedited and unpurged of transmission errors.

Whatever their origins, the Huns could not have dealt the death blow to the Western branch of the Roman Empire—Kelly accepts that ancient thesis, as do I—by tactical superiority alone. Even the strongest tactics can be overcome at the higher operational level of strategy: that is how Rommel kept defeating stronger British forces until El Alamein. But the Huns had operational superiority as well, because they could almost always outmaneuver their enemy with their superior mobility. Just like today's Mongols, they rode better because they started early. In Mongolia's current Eriyn Gurvan Naadam races, the jockeys are children, with the minimum age being five, and they must control impetuous two-year-olds over sixteen kilometers, or seven-year-olds over thirty kilometers, and not on prepared courses but over open grassland.

Yet there was more to the secret of Hun success. Roman, Gothic, and Alan cavalrymen might also have been sublime riders, but they had only their horse and a remount at best; and horses being much weaker than men, they cannot be worked hard for more than a few hours at a time. Every Hun, by contrast, rode with a dozen horses or more, distributing loads and jumping from one to the other, so they all remained fresh. For the same reason, Attila's forces enjoyed also superior strategic mobility. He could sit in his tent somewhere near Arad, Banat (in modern-day Romania) and decide whether to invade westward into Gaul or Italy or south toward Constantinople. The next European who could operate on that geographic scale was Napoleon Bonaparte.

It took superiority at all three levels—tactical, operational, and strategic—to make Attila's unified Huns the "greater-than-expected" threat that finished off the western empire, and inspired the emergence of what became Byzantine strategy in the eastern empire, which thereby lasted another eight centuries by the shortest reckoning. Its essence was to use force not to obliterate enemies but only as a diplomatic tool, and always moderately, to contain dangerous neighbors rather than destroy them. The reason was not only that set-piece battles of annihilation have a high cost in casualties. The Byzantines also never forgot that today's enemy could be tomorrow's ally.

The days are past when Christianity, poisoning by lead pipes, or any other cause could be invoked to explain the fall of one-half of the Roman Empire while disregarding the survival of the other half, though it was just as Christian or just as poisoned. Only the possibility that a military difference, a difference in strategy between east and west, might have determined the outcome has remained unexplored—until now. ◆

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Washington Diarist

Suspicions

On August 4, *Haaretz* reported that Benjamin Netanyahu called Rahm Emanuel and David Axelrod self-hating Jews. A spokesman for the prime minister later denied this, but I have heard from Israeli friends that this conspiratorial explanation is quite popular in the prime minister's office. I have no reason to believe otherwise. The accusation of ethnic infidelity is an old feature of the political culture of the Likud. The defenders of Greater Israel have values, but the critics of Greater Israel have motives. Perhaps the nether regions of the Israeli right will soon follow the nether regions of the American right, and alongside the birthers we will have the brissers: I mean, any man who opposes Jewish settlement in the West Bank *must* have a foreskin. It is important to understand that for the paranoid mentality that regards disagreement as betrayal, all of Emanuel's Israeliness—his name, his Irgun father, his Hebrew, his service in an Israeli army program for civilians during the Gulf War—makes him more, not less, untrustworthy. There is a long and dark history, after all, of apostates and informers who came from within the community. Sometimes their defection was a matter of principle, a conversion, which was complicating, since a change of mind, when it is has intellectual integrity, has to be respected even when it has to be despised; but usually it was understood as a craven act of ingratiation, a hunger for power. When I was a student I believed this about Henry Kissinger, and stood with other students in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza to denounce him as a *moser* for his shuttle diplomacy. (I admit it. I am a recovering Jewish fascist.) Jewish self-hatred is another term for Jewish anti-Semitism, for the internalization of the standpoint of the enemy; and this is a genuinely grave charge. Jews who fling it about for political ends are desperate and disgraceful. And they are some of the same people who are outraged when right-wing African Americans are smeared as Uncle Toms.

So I wish to attest—I have placed my hand on my copy of *The Zionist Idea*—that Rahm Emanuel is not a self-hating Jew. I *know* this. I have never met David Axelrod, but I am aware of no grounds for the suspicion that he has committed "race treason." (I take that charming phrase, which sounds like it was translated from Treitschke, from David Mamet's thuggish book *The Wicked Son: Anti-Semitism, Self-Hatred, and the Jews*. Mamet is another one of the Most Jewish Jews of All.) Differing with Benjamin Netanyahu does not yet make you a bad Jew. If Emanuel is a self-hating Jew because he believes that Israeli settlement in the West Bank should finally cease, then I, too, am a self-hating Jew. Perhaps you will agree, friends, that this is not very plausible.

There is no reason for Israel not to stop the settlements, unless it intends to keep the territories. My own opinion is that this is Netanyahu's intention, his Bar-Ilan oration notwithstanding. No, he does not plan to annex them. That would throw Israel's relations with America into serious crisis. Netanyahu makes peace with Americans, not with Palestinians. His sudden conversion to the idea of a two-state solution is a peace process with the Americans, and nothing more. As I say, conversions must be respected, when they are real; but I see no evidence in Netanyahu of Begin-like or Rabin-like greatness. Politics will always keep him from history. His diplomatic strategy is to postpone diplomacy or to bog it down. He will prevaricate—proposing freezes, denying freezes—on behalf of the status quo, in which the time is never right for the recognition that the Jewish state may be destroyed not by a Palestinian state but by the failure to allow one to come into being. There is nothing visionary about this. A look at the fertility rates on the west side of the Jordan River tells the tale. The continued appeasement of the settlers, and the continued alienation of the Palestinians, and the continued cartographic distortion of the West Bank, are in no way good for Israel. It is cynical and short-sighted to suggest otherwise.

So the administration's policy toward Israel is the correct one? Alas, not. It is, in fact, inexplicably obtuse. For the settlements are not what now stand between the peoples and peace. And the continued alienation of the Israelis is also not such a smart idea. Are their fears less real? They may be forgiven for concluding that Barack Obama thinks so. In the matter of empathy for the Israelis, the speech man is peculiarly speechless. Even if the two-state solution is the only solution, it fills Israelis with disquiet, and not only because they have grown accustomed to their Judea and their Samaria. The demographics of Palestine may lead to one conclusion, but the politics of Palestine may lead to another. It is characterized chiefly by chaos and hatred and violence. Economic progress on the West Bank has not been accompanied by political progress; and the quiet along the Gazan border indicates not so much that Hamas has experienced a change of heart as that the Israelis have achieved the objective of their nasty war. So Israelis cannot help but look upon the Palestinian situation with dread. A dove, too, should be able to grasp this. But Obama so far refuses to do so. A visit to Buchenwald, even in the company of Elie Wiesel, is not what the Israelis are seeking from him. A policy of tough love must show love as well as toughness.

Obama's stringency about "natural growth" in Israeli settlements was more than a tactical error. In its fervor to move things forward it set things back, by undoing previous understandings that were designed to make this diplomacy a little less excruciating. The great irony is that what it set back most of all may have been the Palestinian leadership and its view of what is to be expected of it. Briefly, Obama has restored Abbas to Arafat's concept of the historical agency of the Palestinians. I do not mean that Abbas is mendacious or corrupt in the Arafat way. I mean that he has now assumed Arafat's failed posture of righteous passivity, of waiting for the international community, or the United States, to deliver. Obama's great opening to the Muslim world, a strange blend of realism and multiculturalism, seems so far only to have imbued the Muslim world with the sense that in the cause of reconciliation with Israel it need exert itself no more, because it has at last been understood. I am not one of those Jews who are maddened by American "pressure" on Israel, but I do not take kindly to it when it is accompanied by a bow to the Saudi king.

Leon Wieseltier

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Mr. Netanyahu's Offer (I)

Would it bring peace to the tortured Middle East?

In a complete turnabout from previous positions, but probably also yielding to enormous pressure by President Obama, Israel's Prime Minister "Bibi" Netanyahu has declared his willingness to accept a Palestinian state.

What are the facts?

A generous offer. Since the "two-state solution" has long been declared to be the Holy Grail of the Palestinians, one would have expected that Mr. Netanyahu's announcement be greeted with cheers and hosannas. That, however, not surprisingly perhaps, was not the case. In fact, the Palestinians and all others involved declared it to be an insult and a "non-starter." The principal objections were that Mr. Netanyahu insisted that the newly created Palestinian state would have to be totally demilitarized, and that its air space would be available to the IAF (Israeli Air Force); that Jerusalem would remain undivided as the capital of the Jewish state; that the "Palestinian refugees" would, if they so desired, be returned to the newly formed state and not to Israel; that the Palestinians acknowledge Israel as the state of the Jews; and, finally, that he did not commit for the "settlements" to be dismantled. We shall address some of these objections in this message, the rest in a future message.

> "As Abba Eban, Israel's former Foreign Secretary put it: 'The Arabs will never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.'"

The "Settlements." Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is the ancient Biblical homeland of the Jewish people. This area is part of the Palestinian Mandate, which was declared by the Balfour Declaration and by the mandate of the League of Nations, to be the homeland of the Jewish people. After the 1948 War of Israel's Liberation this area remained in possession of the Kingdom of Jordan, which declared sovereignty over the area. The only possible rationale for the conclusion that this area is Palestinian land is that it is encompassed by the 1949 armistice line. There is absolutely no other reason. This area has never been Palestinian land. In fact, never before the creation of the State of Israel has there ever been a Palestinian people or a Palestinian country anywhere in the long course of human history. The Palestinians were never until recent times in any control over the area. At the very most, the area could be described as "disputed." In fact, a very good case could be made that Jews have a better right than the Arabs to live there. What a shame that even the leaders of our country cannot see this fundamental truth. And don't let's forget that over one million Arabs live in Israel unmolested and nobody gets exercised about that.

Demilitarization. Not so long ago, Israel unilaterally evacuated every last Jewish family from Gaza. One would have hoped that the Palestinians, grateful for being rid of the hated Jews and no longer having to suffer their presence, would have shown their gratitude for that "liberation." Instead, almost from the very first day, they bombarded Israeli cities with thousands of rockets. Eventually, the patience of Israel snapped and it invaded Gaza to put a stop to this outrage. It has to be clear to all that having had such bad experience with Gaza, Israel is fully justified to expect that if statehood were ultimately granted to the Palestinians, and if demilitarization were not imposed and strictly supervised, the Palestinians of the "West Bank" would be equally inclined to attack Israel on a daily basis. Instead of being confronted by the insular Gaza, Israel would be surrounded totally by those who are sworn to destroy it. Full demilitarization would have to be a key requirement of any Palestinian statehood. Without it, virtually all of Israel – its population centers, its industries, its military installations and its international airport – would be under the gun. Life in Israel would be virtually impossible. How could anybody possibly think otherwise?

Return of the "Refugees." During the 1948 War of Liberation, about 650,000 Arabs, goaded by their leaders, fled the nascent state of Israel. They and their descendants wish to "return" to Israel. That is a bizarre request. The principal purpose of a Palestinian state would obviously have to be the ingathering and settling of the "Palestinian refugees" and not to foist them onto Israel. Injecting them into Israel would undermine the Jewish state and smooth the path to its destruction. And that is, indeed, the rub. The principal intent of the Arabs is not the creation of a state, but, as they repeat over and over, the destruction of Israel, which they call the "cancer on the Arab body." And don't let's forget that about 800,000 Jews, who escaped barely with their lives from Arab countries during the War of Liberation in 1948 and during the Six-Day War in 1967, were quickly absorbed into the state of Israel and are now at least one-half of the total population. The Arabs, in contrast, have kept their "refugees" in miserable refugee camps for the last 60+ years, on the dole of the world – mostly that of the United States.

There is little likelihood that Mr. Netanyahu's generous offer, however it might ultimately be modified, will be accepted by the Arabs. Because, if that were the objective, they could have had their own state for over seventy years. But whatever was offered was never sufficient. As Abba Eban, Israel's former Foreign Secretary, so well put it: "The Arabs will never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity." Sadly, therefore, there is little question that Mr. Netanyahu's generous offer of a separate state for the Palestinians will again be rejected – most likely even being followed by another "intifada."

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P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
Gerardo Joffe, President

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Now, President Obama has called on us to end cancer in our lifetime. America's pharmaceutical research and biotechnology companies share that goal. Today, our scientists are working on 800 new medicines to fight this deadly disease that touches so many lives.
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